

Jinchuuriki of the Covenant

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Summary: This is a reposting of Jinchuuriki of the Covenant since it was taken down about a year ago.

1. Chapter 1

A/N

So after a few months of searching, I finally found the email this baby was stuck in and have now pulled it out to repost it since it was taken down some time ago. I'm going to repost one chapter a day hopefully because I'm rereading them and making corrections I missed along the way. For those read this story before, aside from any spelling or punctuation changes I make, nothing's really going to change.

I will say that probably sometime next year maybe, I'll do a rework of this story because I want to make this story better than what this one is. This story was something that I enjoyed writing and was truly the first good story I had. Plus, it also serves as a mile marker for me as far as my skill was. I'd like to think I improved a lot from back then, and I want to honor this fic for being a guideline to help me improves.

Plus, with the Halo 4 out and an eventual Halo 5, I think I'll rework the story so that if I want to, I can do sequels in my own unique way.

Just so we're clear, this isn't a rework, this is only a repost of the story that I loved the most.

The sun had just dipped below the horizon, lighting up the sky in a sea of flames that ranged from bright oranges to dark reds. The clouds looked as if they were aflame, making the setting sun, and former blue skies more exotic to those watching it from the center of the village. Even with all the smoke coming from the massive bonfire, the sky still looked as if were aflame. For the people sitting around

the bonfire, it was nothing but a sad day of regurgitated joy and despair. This was the day that the Kyuubi had attacked the village, killing hundreds if not thousands of people for no reason. Had it not been for the heroic efforts of their Hokage, the Yondaime Hokage, they might have all died on that fateful day. His sacrifice insured the villages' survival, but they had not understood what he had done to his own humanity.

For some, the day was a day they'd sooner never forget than they would forgive what had transpired. It was a time when everything had gone wrong for them. Shinobi and civilians had been lost due to the fighting. The previous wars had drained them of their resources, and the village had been plagued by many who believed their time was up. When peace came, and the Kyuubi suddenly attacked, they all grew into despair before being saved. So to never forget those who lost their lives, they burned a giant wooden fox in the center of the village, there way of showing honor in the sacrifices of the many men and women who died on that fateful night.

But for most of them, it was also a time of drunken revenge. People who were drunk would chase after him in an attempt to "_finish what the Yondaime started"_ , as they often called it. So as the sun finished setting, and eighteen beers began to take its toll on a few of the far weaker ones', it was no surprise when they all sluggishly got up, and staggered out of the bar into the open crowd of people, half drunk and half determined to kill a little five year old boy.

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Naruto lay hidden under the table of his own home. Even after a few years in the Academy, learning how to hide in his own home wasn't something he was good at. In fact, he just plain right out sucked at it. But since he knew that they very often never came to where he lived, he figured he'd be somewhat safe from the attack. As he pulled himself into a tighter ball, he tried to keep his breathing under control, but with all the massive fireworks going on, and people screaming for his blood, he failed.

Naruto kept his eyes closed, part of him hoping that this course of action would help him get the night over quicker while another part of him hoped it would be a bad dream that he would wake up from in a few hours. That's what he always told himself on these days.

There was a loud banging sound at his door, and his eyes widened in freight as he ran out from under the table, and jumped out of the window while dragging his hand down the small drain pipe that connected to his window in a feeble attempt to get away. This would have worked better had there been rain or the pipe be a little wet. Sliding down a dry pipe made his hands bleed as his skin was torn off of his body. Naruto released his grip about halfway down, and fell into the roof of a small newspaper stand and collapsing a wall from the force of his fall.

The blond Jinchuuriki quickly got up, ignoring the pain as he ran towards the shadows of an alleyway and as soon as he got there, he quickly regretted it. Three men, one totally drunk, and the other two looking less drunk, stumbled around while muttering "where is that demon brat" as they rummaged through garbage cans. Naruto's skidding stop had alerted them, and he stared them down for a fraction of a

second before running away as they chased him through the streets, still totally drunk, and sluggish as they tried to give chase.

Naruto pushed through the crowd of drunken people, grateful that most of them were too drunk to turn and try to stop him. A few tried, but in their drunken haze, it was like trying to grab a fish in a river current. Naruto ran past the giant wooden fox as its head broke off from the searing heat, and collapsed down in the massive wall of flames that had been licking at the base of its neck. The once metallic shine of the giant fox was now nothing more than black scorch marks and burned holes that were dripping with the mixture melted wood and smaller pieces of wood splinters.

He hated this place. The people talked of loyalty, of honor, of friendship, and respect. But they chose to hate him. They hated him for a reason that he couldn't explain. They hated him, and he hated them. He wanted to get away from them. He was already running for his life. What would a few extra thousand miles hurt?

He pumped his legs as quickly as he could as he could hear the screams of revenge from behind him. Naruto managed to get out of the village, blasting past the gate and three guards as he did. He didn't dare look back. The guards wouldn't stop him, he knew that much. The angry villagers, he wasn't too sure about. All he figured was that they were still chasing after him. So he'd run. He'd run as fast as he could. He'd leave the village so he wouldn't feel pain anymore.

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Xedraelee Onalerl stared out at the oddly blue and green world that he and his scout force had found. He had found signs of life, human life to be precise. He was one of many strike teams that had been sent deeper into the system where the evil race of humans lived. In his life, he had killed only three hundred humans personally with his own hands. The rest he considered to be nothing short of a major dishonor in his eyes. Using a ships' weapon system to glass a planet from space wasn't something he enjoyed. He personally hated using it to win a battle. To a Sangheili, honor was everything. You either live with honor and die with honor, or have no honor at all.

Xedraelee let out a small sigh as he walked towards the small control panel of his scout ship, Redemption, and looked down over it towards the small two manned controls that was the rest of the bridge. Two of his men sat at their stations, checking the planet for any other signs of life that might not be human. Though he doubted the Covenant had made it this far just yet, he wouldn't put it past them to actually have other scout ships in the area.

He eyed them carefully as they flipped switches, rotated orbs, and pressed holographic keys before shaking their heads. Ahielee Zarhatti, the youngest of the three by only one year, was the one to sigh the hardest it seemed. "There is nothing but human and animal life on the planet, Xedraelee." He reported almost instantly. He wasn't the first Sangheili to question the orders given to them by the three Hierarchs, and he wouldn't be the last.

Just why had they been ordered to destroy an entire race of people

that could learn from the Great Journey? Why had the Hierarchs ordered their baptism by fire when they could join them in peace and seek the same things? Maybe they were just looking into it too deeply. After all, it wasn't like they hadn't fought with them either. The Sangheili and the San'Shyuum had once been mortal enemies until they formed a treaty to search for other holy relicts left to them by their Gods. After they made peace, they seemed to start another war, this time with the Lekgolo, though their war only lasted a few months. The worms were quiet harmless unless combined into a colony where they could use the body provided by the thick suits of armor. Then they were a threat, and a force to be reckoned with. Of course, the Unggoy had joined before then, and after several years of working for them and being restricted several things, began a rebellion. This had proven their worth to the Covenant, and they were granted a special place in the military ranks.

Xedraelee wouldn't forget the other races that had joined, a few by no means of force, but sometimes they weren't really worth it. A single Sangheili could do what four squads of Kig-yar could do in half of the time, and with better results. The Jiralhanae, one of the more brutish races, were as strong as a single Sangheili, and sometimes just as cunning and fast. But they lacked honor, discipline, and above all else, true worth. Most of their ships were hand-me-downs that had very little functioning equipment, and when it was renewed, they were often repossessed. The Yanme'e, though odd and weak, was very good at fighting on the wing, giving hell to any ground-based opponents.

As Xedraelee closed his eyes, he wondered himself just why they were ordered to burn every human world. Surely not all of the humans were that bad.

His eyes opened, and he stood down between the two, putting a hand on Raukee Odpaar's shoulder as he leaned over to take a closer look at one of the screens he was watching. Raukee looked up at him almost looking confused at what they were watching. The people they were watching seemed to be burning something. It was too damaged to tell what it once was, but there was no mistaking the crowd of happy people running around as they continued their celebration.

Xedraelee had seen these before. They normally appeared when they were disgraced by the UNSC, and were forced to retreat. These humans obviously must have done something to them in order to be happy. Maybe they weren't as primitive as he first thought. He couldn't detect a Magnetic Accelerator Cannon (MAC) anywhere on the planet. They had no high power grid like all the other worlds had. They seemed to get their power from a nearby waterfall, meaning they got it the old way before the Sangheili had learned how to harness the power of their gifts left behind by the Forerunner's. Though it pained them to do it, they had no other choice in the end.

Raukee tilted his head a bit as he magnified on a small image. It was odd sight to him. He had never seen something like it before. Ahielee looked over at it as well before the slightly older Sangheili brought up on the main view screen. "What is it?" Xedraelee asked, curiosity finding its way into his words.

"It would appear to be a human running away from other humans." Xedraelee tilted his head to the side a bit as he watched the small human child run out of the massive stone and wood gates of his home.

It was an odd sight. They were still chasing him. It seemed as though only half of the twenty people chasing him had given up though. It was truly amazing to see such a young looking boy run away from adults though. Xedraelee remembered doing it once when he was very little. It was probably before he started training.

Ahielee shook his head. "Humans," he said in disgust. "Why do you think they chase him away? Do they not have honor in training their young?" Xedraelee stood upright, his full height nearly bringing the ceiling of the building onto his head. His bridge wasn't spacey, but it did give them lots of room to work with, but still, a few more inches in height might have been nice. Xedraelee turned to leave, his long legs closing the distance between him and the sliding door in a fraction of a second. "Where are you going?"

"To the surface to check it out."

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Naruto stopped as he tumbled through the trees at the fork in the road. He jumped into the bushes and moved just a few small strands as he watched a few of them run by him without paying a second glance at the other road they could have taken. A few stopped and Naruto held his breath before watching them run off, screaming about killing him. Naruto breathed a sigh of relief as soon as they all passed. He wanted nothing more to do with them. In the five years he'd been alive, he'd been attacked only twice since he "Left the Orphanage", and the last one had put him in ICU for nearly two weeks, that's with the Kyuubi's help.

After waiting several minutes, Naruto crawled out from under the bushes, his life now no longer in danger, and began plucking the small thorns that were in his arms and legs. He was halfway down with his left arm when a pitchfork went into calve. He dropped to the ground instantly. Crying out in pain, he tried to pull the object out with no real luck. For a bunch of drunks standing only ten feet away, throwing a pitchfork was still rather hard. The man who had thrown it had been aiming at his heart, rather than his leg. Of course when you're drunk, you tend to think you're going to hit one thing when you were actually hitting another.

Naruto continued to attempt removing the object as the drunken men circled around, some patting their bats, steel pipes, and other odd blunted objects while a few others were armed with broken katanas or blunted kunai. A blunted kunai didn't make it less threatening to Naruto. In fact, it made it worse. He would rather be cut by one then he would be stabbed. He had been stabbed once. It wasn't very pretty or fun for him.

"We're going to kill you now, Demon." At with that, the beating commenced. Naruto's screams of pain echoed through the forest, but were unanswered. He cried long and hard as they continued to beat every inch of his body with their blunted weapons before the two men with kunai and a busted katana stepped forward, ready to end it all. Naruto watched in horror with stained eyes, and a bleeding head as they approached him, one smiling evilly, the other a face full of revenge.

The man drove the kunai into the back of his neck, cutting off Naruto's airway before removing the object. As his body began to go

limp, the others began a series of stabbing motions into his body, more so to keep him alive rather than dead. Even if they killed him, they knew that the Hokage would surely kill them. But they wanted to kill him so bad. He was an evil being. Why couldn't the Hokage see that?

Just as they began to stop the beating and odd sound echoed from behind them. One of them turned in time to see a ghost appear, and then nothing at all. His body was thrown away, skewered by an odd weapon that glowed in the dark. Just as the weapon began moving towards them, it stopped, and a bright red light hit them from behind.

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Xedraelee landed down safely on the planet's surface. He was still a few miles away from the town they had seen, and decided to keep it that way until he checked out the odd boy that was being chased. He wanted only to see why they ran him off. He figured that he had stolen something, meaning that it might be worth something, even if it was nothing but a piece of food, and then kill him. As for the rest of the town, he was going to check that out later after making sure the place was secure.

He activated his Active Camouflage (AC), and began running towards the boys' last known location. With his long legs, and high stamina, he was able to clear the gap in only a few minutes. He made sure to move fast enough that even if they could see him, they really wouldn't know it was him. As soon as he got near the boy, his eye lingering with the few people that ran past him at the fork in the road, he was certain that the boy had a reason to run.

He watched the boy for a few minutes, wondering just what he was doing. Surely the boy had a reason to be afraid of them. Why else would he run? Xedraelee had always believed that everything was done for a reason. This also fit the case. He wanted to know just why the boy ran. If it was for fun, he could understand that. If it was because he stole something, he could understand that as well. Judging by the images he had seen, the boy was obviously malnourished; a fate that had claimed many lives with the weaker ranks.

After several minutes, the boy came out, picking off the small thorns that covered his body. It was now that he got a good look at him. He wore a shirt that was nearly three sizes too big for him, and was tattered and worn out. He wore shorts that seemed more like pants, and a small piece of string to keep them from falling down. His hair was bright blond, like a sun kissed morning back on his home world. The oddest thing about the boy was his three gashes that he had on his cheeks. No human had ever had an odd thing like that on them, be it some had painting drawn on their flesh but nothing like those.

As he readied his Plasma Sword, a piece of wood with three metal spikes at the end of it stabbed into the boys' calves, effectively pinning him to the ground. The boy cried in pain as he hit the ground, his tiny arms quickly trying to remove the object while the other humans, adults in size, began to circle him. Xedraelee understood their language well as they spoke down to the boy. "We're going to kill you now, Demon!" One of them spat. He didn't see who said it, and he truly didn't care. The humans viewed this child as a demon? Didn't humans have more honor than this? He had always seen

them drag their wounded off, never leaving one behind unless they had no other choice. So why would they resort to such violent tactics now?

As one of them began stabbing the boy with a rusted weapon, Xedraelee let out a low growl as he stepped out of his cover, his AC flickering as he activated his Plasma Sword. One of the men turned to greet the sound, a wide grin on his face before seeing the odd weapon. He stabbed him through the chest, his massive hands grasping his head and hoisting him up without any effort. He tossed him aside, and began marching towards the group of weary men.

He raised his weapon menacingly as a few began to scream. As he was about to kill another; a bright red light began to shine from the boy behind the men. His body glowing blood red as he somehow stood back up, ignoring the pain his body must have been in. Even the mightiest of the Sangheili would not stand from such wounds. So how had the boy managed to do it? A question he wanted answered most instantly as the boy cracking his neck to the side before turning around. The red light blazed fourth as he glared at the men around them.

Xedraelee didn't know what to do. He was frozen in place by this boy. This odd boy. God like he was. The red light twisting and turning around his body, like a second skin being born. His nails turned into claws. His eyes became dark crimson with slitted pupils just like his own. The three odd markings on the side of his face thickened, and a deep set of fangs began growing from his mouth. A single red tail formed from the light as it solidified into a transparent form.

Xedraelee was amazed by this. He knew not to bow before it or attack it. To him this was a sign from the Gods. A God living in the flesh of a human. Irony may have been a word used to describe should there be others around to watch it, but alas, there was not.

The humans before him backed away in fear, some mumbling words that he couldn't quite make out. He understood a few of them, but chose to ignore them as he deactivated his weapon.

The Sangheili took a step back, his eyes never leaving the young boy as he took a step towards the men. In one motion, the boy threw his arm out, and the transparent boy tossed an arm at them, grabbing two with a large hand before crushing them. _Such power, _Xedraelee thought. _By the Prophets, what have I found?! _A moment of joy entered his eyes. He found something extraordinary. This had to be a sign from the Gods. They had not abandoned their great cause. His joy was short lived as the humans began to turn tide and run. He quickly upholstered his sword again, lighting it up in the dead of the night as he became visible.

The boy clearly noticed him, but paid him no mind as he continued crushing those he could capture. In a short time, the men were all dead, the boy and Sangheili stared each other down. One with crimson eyes that reflected a great rage burning within him, the other a pair of reptilian eyes that had a sense of joy in them. Xedraelee knelt down before him, his eyes closing as he spoke. "You need not be afraid of me, my Lord. I am your follower, Xedraelee Onalerl. I am yours to command." The boy stared him down for a few moments before his eyes closed, and his body pitched forward, the red aura vanishing. Xedraelee caught him before he could hit the ground, his

eyes scanning over the boy as his body continued to bleed out. _My Lord, he bleeds! _He quickly contacted his ship. In a few moments, a small beam of light came down from the star night sky as a single small tube of a ship appeared above him. _My Lord, you shall never again be tormented by these humans. _

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Raukee blinked a few times as he stared down at the human child. The boy lay partially naked on a large table, designed for most races of the Covenant. Small mechanical arms twitched as they began to mend his soft flesh with small lasers. Though somewhat crude in design, they were able to mend flesh, and keep it mended long enough for a real doctor to take a look. Raukee however, wasn't so much confused by the appearance of the child as he was by what Xedraelee was telling him.

"You expect me to believe that this human holds a God?" Xedraelee nodded, and looked down at the child. "You lie," His fingers began inching towards his Plasma Sword. Xedraelee met his angry gaze, his sword fully gripped, ready to defend his God. "You would have us believe that this human actually holds a God in him. I think your years as a commander has led you to have blind power. You see only what you want to see, and believe others will believe you no matter what." He growled while gripping his weapon tightly.

Ahielee, watching from the corner of the room, staring at the boy. He wasn't one to question his commander, even if the current situation was something anyone else would question. His views on his commander's sanity now were thinning, but part of him partially believed his story. Like Xedraelee, he viewed things from a different perspective. He believed everything happened for a reason. The odd markings on his cheeks were proof of this.

"Perhaps if we simply check the video logs, we might see if he speaks the truth." The two older Sangheili stopped arguing long enough to turn towards the younger member. He had a valid idea. It would prove to Raukee that he spoke the truth, and he could once again, put him in his place, showing him that he was commander. The three left the room, making sure to lock the door, even if it was against Xedraelee's wishes.

(-)

Naruto's head was hurting. It was hurting quite a lot actually. He had experienced pain like it before, but never remembered how he got it. As he began to sit up, the first thing he noticed was that he was partially naked. His shirt had been thrown to the floor, and his pants were removed as well. Sitting beside him was a small set of silver silk robes. He blinked a few times before putting them on. It was too big. Really too big for him actually. He was certain that only a person that stood about seven or nine feet tall could wear it without problems. But he'd rather wear it then he would his old clothing. He didn't have to remember what happened to know that they were covered with blood.

Looking around the room, he became quite certain that he wasn't in Konoha's Hospital. In fact, he was probably dead. That would at least make sense for the robes, but that wouldn't make sense for all the strange lights that flickered on and off, the odd pieces of metal

with needles on the end of it, or the odd fact that there was no visible light bulb hanging from the ceiling, yet he somehow could see clear as day in the room.

Naruto decided not to pay attention to it. Instead, he jumped off the comfy bed he was resting on, and dropped down to the metal floor underneath him. He was surprised that it was warm to the touch, rather than icy cold. His sapphire eyes blinked as he shifted from foot to foot, trying to understand why it was warm rather than cold. He gave up after a few minutes, and simply smiled. Another test proving that he wasn't dead yet.

A hissing sound behind alerted him, and he turned around, a big smile forming on his face before he noticed what stood before him. Though covered in black armor, it was very easy to tell that it wasn't human. It was far from it actually. Four odd pieces of flesh and teeth made up its jaw, and its head was narrowed, much like a snake in his eyes. Both eyes were reptilian, and on the side of its head, rather than up front. It stood no taller than probably nine feet, and was hunched over just a bit, making it look less than seven feet tall. Two more were beside it, both looking just as equally confused as he was before he backed into a corner.

"Who? Who? who are you?" Naruto's child-like voice caused one of them to drop to his knees, the other two doing the same, but much slower. Naruto stared at them for a minute, wondering if he was really dead. Now that they were on their knees, he was able to see that them straight in the eye.

"I am Xedraelee Onalerl, my Lord." The one in the middle spoke, its head rising just a bit, making eye contact with Naruto before looking back down at the ground again. "Forgive us for not getting to you sooner, my Lord. These humans must have brought you great pain. We have come to take you away from here?"

"Take? take me away?" No way. Naruto looked the three over. This had to be a trick. Here he was, standing up against the corner of some oddly lit room, calling him their lord, and stating they came to take him away? Yep, he had to be dead. "Well this just blows." The three looked up at him, confusion visible in their eyes. "I'm dead aren't I? You three must be some form of Angels that have come to take me to hell because I'm a "Demon", and you are just messing around with me until we get there." Naruto shook his head at the irony of it all.

"Forgive me, my Lord, but you are not dead." The one on the left spoke up. It kept its gaze on the floor. "I, Raukee Odpaar, speak the truth when I say that you are not dead. Xedraelee rescued you from those humans, and brought you here. We are on our way to the holy city, High Charity. Our Prophets shall speak to you of the ages you have missed in your prison of flesh." Naruto raised a brow at his words, but shook it off. Whoever or whatever they were, he didn't want to make them angry. That was the last thing he needed.

"Okay?" The three figures looked up at him when a loud growl echoed from his stomach. The three shared a look of confusion before worry crossed their faces. The one on the right got up to leave, coming back a few minutes later with a plate of meat. He couldn't quite tell what it was, and he probably shouldn't ask what it was. When the

strange creature knelt down to hand it over to him, Naruto's stomach roared again, and he sighed while taking the offered plate of food. The figure backed away slowly, his head still down.

Naruto began eating on the odd pieces of meat, and found them rather delicious, despite not being able to identify them, or even guess what they might be. As he ate quietly, the three figures kept their heads down, not sure on whether to talk to him, or simply leave him alone to eat. They decided to speak with him.

"My Lord, have you a name for us to call you by?" Naruto swallowed the meat in his gullet before answering.

"Uzumaki Naruto," he looked over again. They weren't as scary as he first thought. True they were odd looking, but they were nothing dangerous. Naruto tilted his head a bit, eyeing the other that had yet to name its self. "What's your name?"

The third figure looked around a few times before remembering that he had yet to give his name. "I am Ahielee Zarhatti, Uzumaki." He kept his head down, his own mind telling him he was somehow unworthy to gaze upon him.

"Soâ€¦ where are we going?"

"We are heading to our holy city, High Charity." Ahielee answered calmly.

"And where is that?"

"It is on the outer rim of the UNSC's controlling system. We shall be there in a few hours." Xedraelee answered. Naruto shrugged his tiny shoulders, and put the plate on the bed in front of him. Ahielee grabbed it, and walked away, ready to wash it. Xedraelee watched Naruto look around the room for a few minutes before he too looked around. He quickly realized that this place was not suitable for someone like Naruto, and quickly stood back up. "Forgive me, Uzumaki, but we have only few rooms on our vessel. I shall let you take mine for the night. I'm certain you must be exhausted from using your holy power." Naruto didn't catch the last part. He was tired, and after eating his fill, it was no wonder that he suddenly passed out again. Xedraelee managed to catch him before he fell, and picked him up gently. "Our lord needs rest. Alert me when we come in range of High Charity. I wish to speak with the Prophets about the boy. They must be made aware of him before we bring him in."

Raukee nodded, and walked off, the door hissing close as Xedraelee began to leave with the boy in his arms.

2. Chapter 2

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

Chapter 2

The Prophet of Truth rubbed his lateral neck as he fought back the urge to scream as he exited the council meeting. Why did he want to be the religious leader for the Covenant again? Then he remembered what the Oracle had said while he looked for a conformation on a

glyph given to him by a Kig-yar pirate ship some time ago. In order to keep the Covenant together, he had to sacrifice the "Reclaimers" for the good their race. It had been an exciting, and yet frightening, thirty second experience for him, along with Mercy and Regret as they watched the Oracle's blazing eye ignite to tell them of their false beliefs. It almost took off with the Dreadnought that powered the city. The Oracle was later removed from the system, and put into cold storage so that it could be "Archived" for later studies.

He sped down one of the many antigravity blue roads towards another part of the massive city as he came out into the thick of the early morning cycle. Though as odd it was to him, he still felt that his quest was right. He truly believed that the Forerunners were an extinct race, and that the only way to join them was to go on the Great Journey. Even now as he eyed the massive tripod ship that sat in the center of the holy city, he couldn't help but wonder why or how the humans were related to the Forerunners. He knew that they were evil from their first encounter on the planet that the humans had called "Harvest" and that they possessed a limited technology pool.

Truth looked up as a few buttons on his chair began to glow a bit. Ahead of him was an over packed transport carrying too many Unggoy again. Though they were at war, the Unggoy were good for fighting and were insane breeders. Laws had been placed to restrict their breeding, as they're numbers had grown too large when they first joined. Now that they were at war, they had been relieved of this law, and allowed to breed all they wanted. This made them great military weapons for the Covenant, but when faced without a leader to guide them, or a large mass of numbers, they presented less of a threat. At least the Kig-yar had some courage in them.

His chair weaved around them as their transport came to a slow halt, a few screaming at the small driver that shouted odd things back at them. One of the greatest things about being a part of the council was that their chairs or transports would identify their rank, and make a new path for them when faced with such an obstacle. This was just one of the few reasons why he enjoyed being a Prophet now. There were other good things as well, but nothing quite like that.

His chair lights began blinking, and he cast a quick glance at it. It was an incoming message. He hoped it wasn't from the council, demanding yet another meeting. He could go without another one for a while. They were too tiresome.

His gnarled finger pressed the key with a bit of hatred, and a small Sangheili appeared as a hologram. "What is it?" Truth tried to sound happy with the Sangheili's appearance, but failed just a bit. The Sangheili paid his small annoyance no mind as he nodded towards him.

"I think you for allowing me a moment of your time, Hierarch." He spoke quickly. Truth nodded his return thanks, something he did with the slightest of efforts. His large mantle was prone to falling if he leaned over too much, and it could throw his chair out of sync, causing it to topple over. "I have something you might like to see, Hierarch." Truth wondered what sort of object they brought this time. He knew this man. Xedraelee was his name. He had an odd knack for bringing in the strangest things. He had once brought in a piece of

Forerunner craft that had been the remains of a stealth ship. Though it pained Truth to know that it was all that remained after the humans had blown it up, he was happy with its gifts.

A small screen appeared on his arm chair, and his eyes widened. A small human child with a red light blazing around him, twisting and turning as it fought to take an appearance of some kind. Truth had half of a mind to just yell heresy and be done with it, but there was something odd about it. He had never seen such an odd thing done with a human. Maybe it was some sort of genetic mutation, just like those Demons. No. This was different.

He watched in mild fascination as the human child killed his own with the red light. It seemed as though on his world, humans fought each other. He had heard of these moments. They were called Civil Wars, and he feared that if the truth of the Reclaimers being the Forerunners was ever leaked, this would surely happen.

Truth however, was not convinced of this footage he was shown. "Do you think I'm stupid?" The Sangheili recoiled just a bit from the harsh words spoken from the Hierarch. Truth flicked the image off, his patience now very thin. "I know not why you chose to show that, but when your ship arrives, I shall personally deal with you. Your crimes shall be lessened so long as that _thing _isn't with you." There was a momentary pause as Truth and Sangheili locked eyes. It was then that he realized he _had _brought him. "In my chambers, the human as well. Bring him without being spotted." He snapped a finger over the buttons, and the image faded. _Sangheili, so stupid. _

(-)

Naruto stared at the odd transparent floating cloud before him. He was dressed back in the robe, and had his old clothes on as well. Though Xedralee seemed most displeased by this, Naruto explained that he'd rather have something other than a drafty robe on, which earned him a few chuckles from Raukeeee. Naruto, in the one hour he'd been awake, had been on the bridge of the ship, just staring at the odd design of it. He was amazed by it actually. There was a large part of his mind screaming for him to just touch everything. Unlike anything metallic that he had touched back home, this metal was oddly enough, very smooth, and very warm to the touch. It wasn't like the metals in the village that were usually a bit rough and always cold. He kind of liked the idea of touching something that was metallic, smooth, and warm.

He took in a deep breath as he watched Ahielee continue his work at the controls. Naruto had asked him if he could help, but, like always in the one hour he'd been awake, the Sangheili told him that he would not be needed, as it would be too low for him. Naruto at first thought he was making fun of him, but soon figured that he'd screw it up anyways, so it would be best to just leave it alone. As he watched him work though, he managed to understand that the glowing spheres seemed to control the movement of the ship. If he twisted both spheres a full quarter, the ship would turn at a slow rate. If he turned it at about three full quarters, the ship would turn much faster. If he rolled them forward, the ship would go down. And if he rolled them backwards, the ship would go up.

Understanding that had lead him to understanding where they were.

Raukeeee explained that they were in space, an empty mass of stars, planets, and space debris. There was no up, down, left, or right. It was all numbers, mass, velocity, and other physics he really couldn't understand. He chose to just act like he knew, but it seemed as though Xedraelee was able to see right through it. He promised him that he would teach him, but Naruto didn't get his hopes up about learning it. He doubted he'd live to see another tomorrow with the way the meeting had taken place.

"We are approaching the designated hanger." Ahielee announced absentmindedly. Xedraelee closed his eyes. He was going to die for this crime, he was sure of it. He and his crew, along with Uzumaki Naruto, were going to be executed, or possible just killed without an audience for this. He wondered if the boy could summon the power again. He had tried to get him to do it again, but the boy couldn't manage it. It seemed that he still needed to rest a bit.

So with their death's close at hand, Xedraelee decided to just let it all go. He was standing beside Naruto, Human and Sangheili, standing side by side. Most believed hell would freeze over before it happened without one being in chains. But right now, Xedraelee could honestly say that he enjoyed it. Naruto had proven his strength in his eyes. His ability to withstand anything thrown at him had made him as strong as he was in his eyes. His ability to regenerate from massive wounds earned him a spot on his God list. His outright ferocity made him an equal in his eyes.

He was proud to stand by one so young, and yet so powerful.

Their ship connected with a series of machines that grabbed the ship. It shook a bit, but nothing that would be truly noticed on the inside. Naruto looked up at Xedraelee as he began walking away. Naruto lifted the hood of the cloak over his head, and kept his form concealed as best he could. Naruto had a strong sense of self-preservation, and right now, it was screaming for him to run. The only problem was that he knew if he ran, he wouldn't get far, and he had no idea on where to go. For all he knew, the other worlds were uninhabitable as Raukee had calmly stated when they came out of Slipspace.

That had been when Naruto saw High Charity. To him, it looked like a jellyfish in the cold void of space. Surrounded by a fleet of large, purple and black ships that were nothing but dots when he first saw them, he now saw them as scary crafts that could simply hit them and not feel it or have little to show for it. Naruto also noticed that several smaller crafts were coming and going from a sea foam green world just below them. He wondered if it was habitable or not. He figured with them coming and going that it was. But he didn't know how to actually make the ship move forward, so high jacking it was clearly out of the question.

So he was now faced with the simple fact that he was going to die tonight or whatever time it was. As the hatch opened, he kept his head down, following the massive hooves of Xedraelee as he walked towards the chambers of the Prophet Truth. Naruto hadn't gotten a good look at the guy. Xedraelee told him that if things worked out, which even he doubted they would until a demonstration was given, they would allow him the right to stay, hopefully allowing him to join their ranks. If he had enough power to destroy a bunch of humans, be them unequipped with holy weapons, he was certain that the

boy was worth more than even the simple minded Unggoy or Kig-yar.

It took them a while to get to where they needed to be, and even then, Naruto managed to catch glimpses of odd creatures. He saw one that had something of a birds head, human-like body, and three clawed fingers. They stood a little taller than he did, and Naruto felt a bit shorter compared to Xedraelee. The next thing he saw somehow reminded him an Ape. He remembered seeing something like it in a picture that had been drawn on a window, but they didn't stand upright like these creatures did, and they didn't wear odd colored armor. The next creature he saw made him feel even smaller. A massive creature of metal and orange goop made him feel both sick, and very small. The things were huge! They were possible even taller than Xedraelee, and he was tall. After that, he didn't see many others.

Xedraelee took a long deep breath as he, along with his companions, stopped in front of a metal door. He was already regretting this. It would have been easier for him to kill the boy back on the planet, but he couldn't do it. He would be killing something that was like a God. His people, along with the others in the Covenant had never seen such a boy. His abilities alone made him worthy of honor and a spot on the Covenant. Maybe there were more like him on that world. Maybe he wasn't alone. If he could pull this off, maybe they could go back to get more like him. Though he had asked if Naruto was the only one that was hated, figuring that if they hated others for no reason, it would lead them to others like him. Sadly though, Naruto confessed to being the only one that he was aware of, making the other two, growl, in anger.

The door hissed open, Naruto jumping just a bit at how fast it seemed to open for them. They walked inside, slow and steady, not wanting to alert the mass of people walking around that they were possible about to die. Once they were inside, the door closed, and Xedraelee looked around. He could already tell that a Sangheili team of Honor Guards were cloaked in the corners of the room, and watching them. Naruto didn't notice them, and carefully stepped forward with the others. Once they were in the center of the room, a large chair pivoted to face them. Sitting in the chair was an odd looking creature that had a long neck, a massive weighted crown and mantel resting on his body, and red robes. He made sure to give Naruto a hateful glare before glaring at the three Sangheili beside him.

"This is the human, correct?" The three cringed slightly at his heated tone. They knew this was coming. Xedraelee nodded to Naruto, and he carefully removed his hood. The Prophet seemed even more disgusted with his appearance than when he was concealed by the cloak. "Kill him, and all is forgiven." He spoke calmly, and quietly. Naruto looked up at the three, wondering who would do it. Raukee was the one he voted on for killing him. After all, he didn't seem very thrilled about having him onboard the ship anyways.

"I cannot." Xedraelee told him with a strong voice. He shook his head, his eyes closed. "This child has shown great power beyond that of a humanâ€¦"

"What of the Demons that destroy our forces on the other worlds?! What of them?!" Truth tried to keep his voice down, but failed just a bit at the end of each sentence. He shook his head, a single hand going up to wattle that hung from his chin. He closed his eyes.

"Human, can you use that power again?" Naruto shifted from foot to foot as he kept his gaze with the creature in front of him. Xedraelee told him to never break eye contact or it would be a sign of weakness.

"I am sorry, but it only came on when I was scared." He answered calmly. Naruto's face twisted into a bit of a grin though, even knowing that he was probably about to die. "Thank you," he whispered. Truth glare hardened at the odd boy.

"For what?"

"For calling me human. No one in my village ever called me that." Truth had half ignored him until hearing this. He half expected the boy to just make a fool of his self; try to kill him even, but not give such an odd reply. Truth leaned forward a bit, his eyes resting on the boy. He was odd looking. He had heard reports of a few humans marking themselves with odd images, but nothing like what he had. Three lines crossed over his cheeks, and odd thing in deed to have. The other odd thing was that even though he wore a shirt, it was torn and full of holes, allowing him a perfect view of another tattoo. It had a spiral with four odd looking scribbled markings above and below the spiral.

"Oh and what is that they call you?"

Naruto tilted his head a bit before answering. The pain look he had in his eyes made it clear he didn't like the names. Truth found some joy in his pained look, even some joy in the answer he gave. "They've called me a monster, a demon, and an abomination of human life. Every year on my birthday, they attack me, try to kill me, all because of these markings I have. I don't know why, but when Xedraelee-san found me and the mob attacked me" Naruto's voice trailed off as he closed his eyes to not remember the intense pain he felt. Truth shook his head.

"I've heard enough. Kill them."

The shadows came alive, and three Sangheili stood back to back, forming a triangle around Naruto. Even if it cost them their lives, they were going to ensure that boy at least have a moment or two to heal his powers. Maybe they would come back right now. Xedraelee gave the boy a pleading look as his face twisted into pure fright. Four Sangheili appeared, these ones wearing similar armor, but had two pieces of metal on their helmets to make it look like ears. Naruto tried to take a step back, but Raukee's legs blocked his path. Energy swords were drawn from both parties, and Naruto could feel the searing heat without touching the blades. His mind began to race as they attacked them. Outnumbered, it was no wonder when one slipped by them, grabbing Naruto by the head, and throwing him out of the room.

The door hissed open before he could hit it, and he skidded on his back out in front of Kig-yar that quickly pulled a circular weapon from its hips. A moment later, the Honor Guard came out, barking orders to the Kig-yar that had its weapon drawn. Naruto scrambled to his feet. He needed that power again. He needed it to survive. He didn't want to feel that pain again. Raukee, Ahielee, and Xedraelee needed him to awaken that power again.

Xedraelee ran out of the chamber, his two comrades following him as they tackled their Sangheili brethren to the ground. Xedraelee was kicked away, and stabbed in the shoulder before Raukee managed to backhand the attacker away. Truth came out of his chamber, a small smile on his face. The other Sangheili Honor Guard emerged as well, their Plasma Swords glowing as they stared down the opposing heretics. Xedraelee looked back at Naruto, hoping that the power would come to him now. It wasn't. He was too frightened by what he saw.

Before he had time to question him on why it wouldn't come to him, he was quickly blocking another strike with his Plasma Sword. The two Sangheili glared each other down, one's glare full of hatred and shame, the other full of sadness and regret. Raukee had given up, something no Sangheili would do unless face with no option. He would surely die with no honor now, and knowing that he shamed his people. Ahielee had been beaten, and was pinned to the ground, his head facing Naruto with hatred burning in his eyes.

Naruto took a single step back, and then darkness clouded his vision with a musty smell hitting him like a ton of bricks. He felt his legs leave the ground. He began flailing them around as he tried to kick whatever it was that held him. Pain ran through his body as he felt his arm get broken before he was thrown away. Xedraelee cried his name before he too was down on the ground, one of the Jiralhanae being the culprit. Naruto hastily got to his feet, his arm clutching his broken arm as he fought back tears. The Sangheili surrounded him, their weapons drawn and ready to kill him. Xedraelee watched with sad eyes as one came from behind, and stabbed Naruto through the chest with his weapon. Naruto dropped to the ground, lifeless and still. They holstered their weapons, their heads shaking in disgust.

Truth came to the three Sangheili, an amused grin on his face. "Tell me, where is his power now?" Xedraelee blinked a few times. Where was his power? Was it a fluke? Had his eyes deceived him? No. They had been no lie in what he saw. He saw his power. He saw him stand after suffering immeasurable wounds. If he was going to use that power, it would be now. Truth snorted. "Kill them. They are heretics." He declared as if he was talking about the weather. A single Sangheili stood ready to deliver justice when his body froze. Truth looked on with annoyance. "Well? Be done with him already." He snapped.

The Sangheili dropped his weapon, and then fell over, his body curling in to a tiny ball. Behind them, a beam of red light had exploded from the boy. It waved around violently, twisting and turning as it fought to grab something. Wisps of energy licked at the metallic walls, cracking and slicing parts of them as the boy seemingly got up as if unharmed. If all eyes were not on the boy, they would have noticed Xedraelee with a grin. The boy had awoken his powers again. The holy red light twisted and turned as the boy stood up; once again taking the odd form it had previously taken. His thin markings on his cheeks thickened, and his fangs and claws grew once more. His once scared sapphire eyes went crimson with slits, and his wounds vanished from sight.

Naruto blinked as he looked over the stunned Sangheili, Jiralhanae, Kig-yar, and few Unggoy that now stood before him, some pointing weapons at the ground now as they watched the wounds that had yet to heal, heal. A single Jiralhanae stepped forward, his massive arms spread wide like a wrestler as he prepared to pounce on the boy.

Naruto stood there calmly, his hateful crimson eyes glaring straight towards the Brute that had its foot on Xedraelee. Naruto hadn't been paying attention to the Brute until his vision was blocked by his fist. Naruto had taken a Jiralhanae's full punch without batting an eye until a piece of his fur touched his eye.

Truth looked on in wonder. The boys' powers returned, and his body healed. No easy feat for one so young, or for a human. Truth watched in amazement as Naruto carefully, and unemotionally, squashed the Brute with the red light, making it take the form of a giant hand that squeezed the life right out of him. Naruto threw the body down off the small sidewalk they were on, and watched with hateful eyes as the body plummeted towards the sea of green mist below. Once he was certain that the body wasn't going to get back up from the fall, he turned his gaze to the Honor Guards' that still stood; their weapons drawn, and ready to kill Raukee and Ahielee.

Naruto calmly lifted his non broken arm, and flung another arm at the. The transparent arm slammed into them before they could move, sending them skidding backwards, slamming into other members of the Covenant as they appeared. Once he felt his arm go slack, he pulled it back, pulling the two Elites with it before releasing them once the hand came back into view. Their bodies flailed wildly as they fell to their deaths in chasm below. The Jiralhanae only had to take one look from the boy to step off of Xedraelee, and charged him with arms spread wide. Naruto calmly stopped him with his one good arm before the Brute sent a punch to his face. Naruto once again didn't feel it.

Raising his broken arm, an evil grin appeared on his lips as he showed him healing abilities, along with those watching. The arm cracked and popped as the broken limb snapped back into place at where it had been broken, and healed the long gash that once covered the arm. Now it was their turn to truly feel some fear. Naruto decked the Brute in the face, his jaw snapping to the side and almost off when his body twisted with blow. As he spun around, he staggered forward and straight into Naruto's enhanced punch, smashing straight through his rhino tough skin. Naruto yanked his dark bloodied arm out, and watched the Jiralhanae fall to the ground, alive, but not getting up.

Naruto took a deep breath as he looked at his hands. _Is this why I'm hated? _He closed his eyes, instincts guiding him as he got down on all fours, growling loudly at the people in front of him. A few of the other Sangheili took a step back, momentary shock from his actions. The Kig-yar began to tremble alongside their Unggoy friends, some already fleeing at the sight of the inhuman human. A few massive beasts appeared, their Fuel Rod Cannons ready to fire. Naruto turned to face them, a large grin appearing on his face. Lekgolo, that's what they were.

"Enough." Truth spoke in a whisper, but everyone heard it. Naruto turned back to face the Prophet as he glided towards them. Naruto stared at him as he circled him, his bodyguards looking at each other with their weapons drawn. "Indeed, you are not human." He corrected his later call on the boy. With his powers active, Truth began to wonder what the boy could do against an army of UNSC Marines. He killed one Jiralhanae, a feat not easily possible for one human alone, and he managed to kill two of his Honor Guard, the best of the best of the Sangheili. Yet none of them seemed to harm him when he

gained this power.

Naruto watched him carefully. A voice in the back of his head told him to kill him and move on. His body wanted nothing more to kill him, feeling as though it would let him live a while longer. But his mind didn't want to kill him. As odd as it was, Naruto couldn't even move in his presence. He struggled to move his head alone to keep the Prophet in his gaze. Xedraelee was the main thing he would latch to when the Prophet crossed his path.

"You're powerâ€¦ do you know where it comes from?" A good question. Naruto didn't know anything of his past. He shook his head. "I see. Would you say it comes from the power of a God?" Naruto snorted at it, causing Truth to stop. "You snort at the idea of your powers being that of God? Why?"

Naruto stood up, his power letting him do so. He had an evil smirk on his face as he replied in an icy tone. "There is no God in this world." Several began screaming heresy at his words alone. Naruto silenced all of them with burst of his holy red light. A few of the frightened Unggoy ran away in fear. "If there was a God, how can he justify my powers being used for good, when all I feel is hate while I use it? Why would God allow me to suffer from their anger, and let them go unpunished for harming me?" Truth came to a stop beside Xedraelee as he stood back up from his bow. Raukee and Ahielee did the same, along with a few of the other Sangheili that took his power for being God like.

"You are without faith. You are lost."

"Lost?" Naruto snorted at the very word. Xedraelee wondered where this boldness came from. Surely no human was this bold when speaking to a religious leader while spouting off that there was no God. "I was born lost. I was kicked out of the orphanage at the age of three. I was forced to live on my own for so long now that it all seems like a distant memory. I would want nothing more than to die knowing those that harmed me got what they deserved."

_A baptism by fire, _Truth thought.

Naruto looked down at his hands again, staring blankly at the odd claws he now had. "If you're going to kill me, you should know that I will survive long enough to kill you first." Truth waved a hand as a few Lekgolo prepared their weapons. At point blank range, Truth had no doubt that they would surely destroy the body of the boy. But with his power, he doubted it would do much good if he was in fact a real God.

"What is going on?!" An aged voice shouted. Sangheili and Kig-yar moved away as another creature appeared. Dressed in similar clothing to Truth, he looked far older than the Prophet of Truth and far more senile as well. When he saw Naruto standing there with his holy red light clinging to his body, he began screaming for his head. Truth silenced him with a wave, ordering the Elites and Jackals to holster their weapons. As the Covenant military forces looked between the two people, Truth hissed at him to silence himself.

"Mercy, I suggest you hold your aged tongue." Truth hissed in a silent whisper as he floated over to him. He made sure the only they could hear what he said as he leaned closer to him. "This human might

be worth something to us." Mercy looked over at the odd boy as the red light bubbled around his body. He could sense the boy's desire to kill at the moment. It was almost palpable. He could swear that he could truly taste his desire to just kill them. Truth looked over at Xedraelee as he stared down the boy. For a second time his holy powers had graced him with their presence. Truth knew that with some of the Covenant here staring at him; it would be hard to not allow the boy a chance to explain himself further. No human had this power. This could only mean that he wasn't human.

"What is this?" Truth closed his eyes. Regret was now here. This was perfect. Once he saw his power, and the three Prophets agreed to letting the boy join, no one would dare question them. Naruto turned an angry crimson eye towards the new person, one he could guess only to be the third Prophet. Upon seeing Naruto, his Honor Guard quickly drew their Plasma Swords. Naruto turned around fully to face him, his red light darkening as his eyes narrowed in anger.

"Regret, enough." Truth hissed. The youngest of the three paid his older friend no mind as he mindlessly ordered his Honor Guard to attack. Naruto made quick work of them. In a short order, he had either killed or disabled all of them, leaving Regret vulnerable to an attack. He was currently without his Fuel Rod Cannons, and with only a weak shield, he doubted that he could survive a confrontation with the boy. "Make him still, Xedraelee." Truth whispered. "The boy has proven his worth."

He could only nod as he approached Naruto. The blond Jinchuuriki turned to watch him, his eyes staring straight at his weapons. Xedraelee placed his remaining Plasma Sword on the ground, making sure to keep eye contact with Naruto before speaking. "Calm yourself, Uzumaki. You have proven to all who you see before you that you are a noble warrior." Upon hearing those words, Naruto let go of the power he held and dropped to a single knee. Xedraelee caught him before he could fall, smiling mentally at the fact that he had gotten him inside the Covenant. His God was safely inside the holy city, and now he could rest peacefully so long as the brethren of those he killed did not come after him.

Mercy floated over to the boy as he opened a single eye, his body tired from over using the holy power he wielded. "You are an odd creature." He told him bluntly. Naruto blinked a few times before Xedraelee put him down. Mercy eyed him. The blond hair was not something anyone had ever seen in the Covenant. His sapphire eyes that could change with the power held a certain sense of peace to him, like he was ready to die. The once thickened markings on his cheeks were back to being tiny lines. He no longer had claws or fangs. "Tell us your name." He demanded.

"Uzumaki Naruto."

"Uzumaki Naruto," Mercy began floating around him as he mulled over the name. He stopped when he noticed the other tattoo he had on his stomach. His chair leaned over as he did, and he stared at it. He could almost feel something evil about just by looking at it. He snorted at it before coming straight back up, his chair helping him as well. "Tell me something: Why do you have this power? Do you know where it comes from?"

Naruto thought about it for a moment. Sadly, he did not expect what

one of them had shouted at him when he had been taken away by ANBU after managing to stab him several times. "Kyuubi!" He whispered. The three Prophets shared a look of confusion. "Someone once said I was the Kyuubi."

"What is a "Kyuubi" young one," An Honor Guard that had not faced him asked.

"Kyuubi was a powerful deity that attacked our village out of the blue one night. It happened on the night that I was born. The Yondaime Hokage, the most powerful Shinobi in our village, managed to kill the demon, and save the village. It cost him his life however. His death ranked him as God in the eyes of my people for being able to stop him. I always looked up to him as a hero for saving the village, but why my people constantly attacked me, I'll never know. They said I was a monster, a demon, and that I was to die to save the village." Naruto shook his head as he looked down at his own hands again. "I'm not a monster."

Truth smiled for a moment before he suddenly frowned. If there were more people like him on his world, and the UNSC got to them first, then his forces wouldn't last long against an armada of people like him. Maybe he could use this one, and destroy the others. Yes. He would have to destroy his world to prevent the UNSC from getting people like him. "Xedraelee, you found him, so you shall train him. I already have great plans for him." He smiled down at Naruto, and the young Jinchuuriki blinked a few times. "I have other things to do however. Come to me at early cycle, and we shall discuss your future in the Covenant." He left with the other two Prophets following him.

"Truth, are you mad?" Regret whispered harshly. "He is a human."

"I know that. But no human can do what I saw him do."

"What if there are more just like him?" Mercy asked. He had to admit that he rather liked the idea of finding more like him. An army of humans with his ability he couldn't even dream of the possibilities. There were too many ideas he could come up with.

"They must be killed. More than one is enough for us. Just having him will cause problems. Even for ones such as us." He sped away, heading straight for a certain Jiralhanae's quarters. "I have someone in mind that can do the job. Let this not be spoken to any of the Sangheili though. I feel as though they may be corrupted by his power." With nothing else to say to the other, they departed. One having a plan to destroy yet another world, the other two wanting nothing more to do with the Human child.

A/N

There was something I forgot to mention in the last chapter. This story takes place, as of right now with Naruto being five to six years old, about twelve years before the events in Halo 2 take place. I figured I should state that before anyone questions me about it. Now, with that being said, if anyone has read any of the Halo books, this will also cover a few things in it as well. I would however, like to know if someone knows the name of the Elite that became the Arbiter in Halo 2. He was mentioned in one of the books, and I don't

own that one. Also, before anyone gets worried about me having Naruto fight John, it will be noted that I'm not going to have them interact much. I don't need to get yelled at about having Naruto pushing him back or getting his ass kicked by him. I have other things in mind.

Now I would also like to thank everyone who reviewed this story so far. I was a little worried that someone would call me an idiot for having an, Elite thank Naruto a God. My friend figured that if they saw Naruto using Kyuubi's power, they wouldn't understand, and they certainly wouldn't be able to explain it, thus making him something close to God. Anyways, take care everyone. Oh, and yes I will be working on For Answers as well. So don't worry about that.

3. Chapter 3

A/N

Okay, first and for most, I would like to thank everyone that has been reviewing this story, and for everyone that helped me out with Halo 2's Arby. Thanks. I would also like to inform everyone that I've only read the last three books to come out. Cole Protocol, Contact Harvest, and Ghost of Onyx. I don't own either of these, but I wish I did. Because of where I live however, and because I don't trust our mail company for jack, I can't run out to get the others or order them. So for those of you that helped me out with his name, I thank you big time.

Chapter 3

Naruto fell to his knees as he was kicked in the back. His cuffed hands flew forward, allowing him to stop himself before hitting the ground. A metal boot slammed into his back, making his head bounce off the hard gravel beneath them. He swore under his breath as he was yanked back to his feet by a metal hand. He shook off the pain as he gave a hard glare at the man or rather Demon behind him. Being the only human in the Covenant gave them a bit of an advantage. That advantage was that Naruto could go in to a UNSC controlled world or base, release a beacon when they transported him to said world or base, and bring in the Strike Force. However, in order to get to said places, he had to be a survivor from the Covenants attacks. That was the easy part. Getting around in a base with Covenant tech, not so much.

So it was no surprise that after thirteen successful missions, he would eventually get stopped. He got stopped by a metallic beast of a man, his voice booming with God like force from his helmet he wore. The lime green armor he wore was massive, possible even making him stand as tall as the Sangheili. This hadn't been the first time he'd actually run into one of these Demons. They were called Spartans and tough as hell to take down. He had seen one take down three Jiralhanae without really putting up an effort. He had also seen them take down squads of Sangheili that weren't equipped with Energy Shields or holy weapons. He had seen them run at high speeds, jump higher than any ordinary human, lift things no ordinary human could lift without the aid of others or a machine, and break limbs on his allies like twigs. It was because of their ferocity in battle that they had earned the nickname "Demon".

So when Naruto was picked back up, and forced to continue walking, he wasn't surprised when the Demon spoke to him. "Why are you helping the Covenant? Don't you care even a little for your people?" Naruto snorted at him as he walked into the cell that was in front of him. He wanted nothing more to do with the Demon. The Spartan shook his head as he shut the metal door, and turned to walk away.

Naruto watched him go, his eyes narrowed on the back of his head as he cracked his neck. The only reason he'd been caught was because he'd been spotted while setting up the radio for a transmission to his fleet. He knew they got the coordinates, so all he had to do now was sit back, and wait for them to show up. He knew they wouldn't kill him just yet, even if they had reasons to believe he was also helping the Innies. Naruto leaned back against the cold stone wall with his eyes closed, and a sly smile on his face. He knew that the commander of _Red Dawn_ was on his way now, and he knew he wouldn't glass the planet until he was off of it, either dead or alive.

So with nothing else to really do, he simply closed his eyes, and began waiting for his friends to show up. God knows they wanted to do this as much as he did.

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Thel Vadamee, a Kaidon of his clan, and commander of his current vessel, the _Red Dawn_, eyed the oddly desert looking world. This was where Naruto's signal had come from before it was cut off. Thel didn't know if this was a bad sign or not, but he was determined to bring him out, whether dead or alive. His golden armor always felt a bit heavier when he did this. He hated doing it though. Sending Naruto out on missions just like these had been the greatest thing in the Covenant, but it made him worry far more. Naruto's statues inside the Covenant wasn't as high as it should have been in his eyes, and sending Naruto on missions like these hadn't been his greatest choice for him either. Though he was strong of heart and mind, he lacked the experience that most Sangheili would have for his age. By human years, Naruto was now eighteen. For the Sangheili, age meant very little for one so young.

Thel closed his eyes as the erratic sound of beeping and growls grew louder. How he hated this. He knew that whenever this happened, it meant that Naruto was either getting impatient or was getting annoyed by something. Naruto had patience, but even it had its own limits. This was what put him apart from other Sangheili that would be his age. Naruto had patience and partial battle experience for his age, some his age would not have. Though there was a difference in power for Naruto and Sangheili his own age. Naruto possessed the powers of a God, Sangheili did not. Their energy weapons were good, but Naruto's raw power and determination made them weak.

Naruto was every part of the Sangheili race, and the only thing that held him back was his human blood and body. Thel cursed the boys' luck. How he wished Naruto was a Sangheili in both blood and body. He would be a powerful asset to his Keep. But since Naruto would never be a true Sangheili, he felt pity for him, and more for his self in knowing there was nothing he could do.

Thel looked over the crew of the bridge, his eyes glaring dangerously at a few of the new recruits. They were nothing to his strongest, and even though they had bravery in their hearts, they were prone to easy

fear at times. How he wished he could have a ship filled with the strongest of the Sangheili, handpicked by him for his likings. He took a deep breath, calming his slightly rattled nerves as he awaited the strike team he sent down to find Naruto's signal.

The humans had begun to learn how to jam their transponders, allowing them to easily find their warriors, and it was causing minor problems in their plan at the moment. The human world was known as "Scion" by the humans. It was nothing short of a desert world. Every part of it was covered in sand, and he wondered if that was their choosing, or a last resort base for humans that had escaped their barrages on their worlds as they rained down death to glass their worlds.

"We have made contact with the strike team." Thel was torn from his thoughts as a red Sangheili spoke. Thel turned to face him, a slight impatience forming in his eyes as the Sangheili looked back over his screens. "We have confirmation that he is alive." Thel would have exhaled his held breath that he'd been keeping for the last four hours. He wouldn't understand why Naruto agreed to these suicide missions, but as a friend, he always felt a little worried sending him into battle the way he was. "Shipmaster, what are your orders?"

Thel gave him a hateful glare. "Isn't it obvious?" He hissed. He hated this one. Though strong, he was lacking in the mental department at times. Right now, he was lacking big time. "What is his status?"

"He is chained up in a, ceil." Thel blinked a few times. No wonder the signal got cut off so quickly. They had captured him. But why would he let himself get captured? This could or would pose a problem with the Prophets if they heard of this. If he wanted to resolve this, he'd have to move fast. "Xedraelee and his team are preparing for departure. Shall I tell them to go ahead?"

"No. Keep them here for the time being. I'm sure that Uzumakiee has a reason for letting his self be captured." _He usually does when he wants something. _"Have Xedraelee come to the bridge. And get a transmission on him immediately. I have a feeling that he was captured on purpose, and I dare not miss another show like the last one." The Sangheili began to nod in agreement. Yes, the last one had been most impressive.

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Naruto watched the oddly funny, and yet humiliating display of marksmen from the three marines watching him. They weren't so much watching him as they were listening to him criticize their shooting skills. One of them, an old man with a gruff voice, and cigar in his mouth, was trying to teach the newest recruits how to shoot. The two rookies, nervous as hell to be out in the middle of nowhere with a prisoner that was possible working with the Covenant, listened to him correct them as best he could. However, it would have been easier for him to possible teach a throne how to fly. They couldn't fly. They looked like a pig, but had fur over their bodies.

The gruff man shook his head as the two recruits missed the cans again. "You need to keep your breathing steady, and when you have lined up, hold your breath before firing. It makes it a lot easier to keep the gun still because it slows your heart rate down just a bit.

However, you don't want to hold it for too long, or your heart rate will skyrocket, causing you to have a harder time getting a clean shot." He spoke while shaking his head. They tried, and failed again. Each wasting a single magazine from their pistols as they tried to shoot the cans again.

"You guys really suck." Naruto muttered.

The youngest of the three, a short boy with black hair and hazel eyes glared at him. He had his name pinned to his marine clothing and armor he wore. Steven V. Switchfoot. Odd name. At least the Sangheili went deep with their names. They were named by three parts, and were named at birth by their parents. They were given one name, their main name before earning the right to make a second name for them self. This was something Naruto hated about his culture. Uzumaki sounded rather odd, but he liked Naruto a bit. Naruto sounded cool to him, whereas Uzumaki sounded somewhat gay.

"If you know how to shoot, why don't you come work for us, you lousy bastard. I'm sure we could use a few people like you." He told him in a hateful tone. Naruto smiled at him, his dirty fatigues crinkling as he stood up with a groan. Once he was on his feet, he gave the man the finger with a smile before walking up to the bars. Steven glared at him. "Why are you working for the Covenant? What's in it for you?"

"Honor, respect, the fact that we're kicking your assâ€¦" Naruto paused for a moment. "Ohâ€¦ and all the cool food I get to eat. Throne is a very taste meat. You seeâ€¦" Steven began to ignore him, as Naruto caught on about midway into his description of throne. Naruto sighed as he put his back to the cell. _What the hell is taking them so damn long? If they don't hurry up, I'm busting out of here, jacking a ship, and heading up there to kick someone's ass. _Naruto's thoughts were mostly pointed towards the ass kicking of a certain Zealot. If Thel wasn't here in the next ten minutes, he was going to go ballistic on the humans, with or without his SpecOps Armor, and then whop his ass for being late. Thel prided himself on being on time. If he was ever late, it was either because he was fighting a fleet of human vessels, or the Prophets had asked him to be elsewhere while another ship was sent to get him.

Naruto closed his eyes, and began to breathe calmly as he waited the ten minutes out. He was on his snapping point at the moment. Zara, a member of his team, had once jokingly referred to one his snapping moments as a Point of No Return, or PNR. Thel had been late, only because he had been engaged by UNSC patrols. This was forgivable. Naruto had forgiven him for it, and had destroyed an entire base because of him being late. Naruto was prone to have a short patience when they were on the clock. Anything that resulted with time was a top priority to him when it came to missions. If you were late, you were going to get your ass kicked unless you had a valid reason.

So as he listened to the gunfire from the idiot marines behind him, he wondered how they were going to get him out. Well he could actually get himself out. The cuffs that bound him were weak compared to Covenant bindings. Naruto had no problems breaking them, and their cell bars were nothing but a joke to him. He could snap them like twigs when using just an ounce of his holy power. So for him to break out right now would be nothing but a piece of cake. However, if he broke out before the fleet arrived, it would cause problems for him,

and he would have a hard time getting off the rock before they began glassing the planet. With the world being made of sand, Naruto wondered if the whole place would literally become a giant glass ball. Now that would be something to see.

The slight rustling of footsteps got his attention, and he grinned from ear to ear. _Thel, you just got saved from an ass kicking. _Naruto cracked his neck, his fingers, his legs, and then turned around with a grin. "Hey, pretty in pink, catch!" Naruto broke the restraints with a flick of the wrist, shattering three bars on the cell, and threw them at the three marines, spearing them in the chest before they could even point their weapons at him. As soon as he was certain they were dead, he turned to a spot where nothing stood for a moment. Then a hissing sound came as AC's were deactivated. Before him stood Ahielee and Raukee, along with two other Sangheili and four Unggoy who looked ready to tear everything apart at the moment. "Let me guess, trouble?"

Raukee grinned as he tossed him a small bag that he caught with ease. Naruto began walking back into the cell as he opened it up. "We were delayed because the Prophet of Mercy chose to come with us today."

Naruto paused for a moment with his task of putting on his armor. "I thought that Mercy had no love for watching these battles take place. Regret has been the only one to watch these moments. Why the sudden change of heart?" Naruto didn't notice that Ahielee had shrugged his shoulders. Mercy never had any love for watching them glass human worlds. In fact, he seemed to always hate it. Naruto had heard that he was once a Philologist and leader of the ascetic priests. Regret on the other hand had always chosen to follow the Sangheili into battle, namely because he was used to working so close to him. There were even rumors that he kept a weapon under his robes.

"We thought that too, but we have our orders." Ahielee answered as Naruto walked out. Naruto cracked his neck again as he threw the bag to the ground.

His armor was Sangheili design, but was trimmed down a bit. He wore gauntlets like the UNSC Spartans, but was solid black to match the Sangheili SpecOps armor. His metal boots were the same, but they also had a two clawed toe design as well. His helmet was also Sangheili design, but they had also given it two prongs, like ears, to rest on his head, a single red visor, and covered his mouth completely. Not a single part of his skin was visible, and it was to make sure that no UNSC ever figured out that he was with the Covenant. At his hip was a single, cut down, Plasma Rifle, and on the other side was a single Plasma Sword, cut down and refitted for him in a more personal use. At the small of his back were also two small pieces of metal, along with two others on his shoulders.

"Yeah, we have our orders." Naruto grumbled. The Sangheili strike team turned to leave, only to stop when they realized that Naruto wasn't following. "Tell our ride that I'll be a little late. There's someone I wanna kill." He walked off, leaving the team behind. One of the Unggoy looked up at Raukee as if to ask a question, but remained silent as he too began walking away, his team heading for the Phantom that had brought them to the surface.

Spartan-098, Ralph, stared blankly at the desert world around him. It reminded him too much of his old home world of Azure. Like this world, Azure, though oddly named, was actually a desert world with azure colored sand, rather than the normal teal colored sand that Earth had. This world had the same kind of teal colored sand, but it was also a lot thicker, meaning that it was closer to actual packed earth, rather than sand. The world was a stable planet with tons of minerals buried underneath it. There was one cave in the whole place, and it lead to a cavern that was deep underground, where thousands, maybe even millions of crystals lay in the walls, ceiling, and floor of the place. They were used for powering focusing lenses on laser equipped machines.

The Spartan sighed while shaking his head. He knew that this world was about to get glassed. The signal he intercepted, by sheer luck, had been active for far too long in his eyes. It was about to get burned, and he didn't want to be here when it happened. He knew that a single Spartan, or even three hundred Spartans, couldn't stand up to the guns of Covenant Destroyer. If they could, then he might stay and fight it off when it showed up. However, there weren't three hundred Spartans here, and they didn't have enough firepower to last against a single Covenant Destroyer. So their only option was to run.

To Spartan, running was not an option. You either stay and fight, or simply fight until you couldn't fight anymore. He was trained to use anything as a weapon. If he could pick it up, it was a weapon. This was how he'd been trained. This was what he lived for. It was the only thing a Spartan knew how to do.

Ralph took in a deep breath, exhaling once his lungs began to burn a bit, and momentarily fogged his faceplate. He never really liked to think about the future, but when he did, he always came to one question: What would he do when the war was over, and if they won? It was a question that no Spartan wanted to have answered. With their luck, they'd be frozen until they were needed again. Not a bad idea, but he personally never liked the damn Cryogenic Pods.

Alarms began sounding around the base, and he cursed while bolting towards the door, his hands snatching up the BR55HB SR (Battle Rifle) and ran towards the command center to get an idea on where the alarm had been sounded from.

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Naruto stood in the center of the base, his arms folded over his chest, and his eyes closed. Broken and sliced up marines lay around his feet, bleeding out. Naruto wasn't happy with their deaths. He wanted to kill the Spartan that found him. He wanted to break every bone in his body for both finding him and for the pain the UNSC had caused him. Besides, he had come to enjoy killing them for their heresy towards the Covenant.

Naruto opened his eyes, and smiled behind his mask as the lone Spartan appeared before him, angry probably flashing behind his faceplate. Naruto smiled as he raised his weapon to point at him. _I will not be stopped. Not after the pain you have caused me._

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Thel growled as another incompetent Sangheili walked off his deck. The coward had been frightened by the small blimps that appeared on their screen, only to realize that they were nothing but transport vessels. Thel wondered why incompetent Sangheili somehow always managed to get on his ships. There was always one of them, and this time it happened to be the idiot working the weapons' controls. He would devise a punishment for him later.

"Have we made contact with Ahielee or Raukee yet?" Thel hoped that at least one of his bridge crew could do something right.

"Yes." Fin replied. His single eye narrowed in confusion.

"On screen," he ordered while walking over to the center of the bridge, unconsciously tugging at his new shipmaster's cloak. The image of Raukee appeared from inside his Phantom.
"Report,"

"Uzumakiee is staying behind to destroy the base. I believe he has been angered by his capture, and seeks to undo the damage caused by it." Raukee answered seriously. Thel closed his eyes. This could be a problem. "Should we order him to pull out?" Thel would have laughed at that. Naruto got immunity on several things, disobeying orders being high on the list. The Hierarchs seemed to be pleased when he disobeyed orders given to him by superiors. No one else got this immunity but him, which angered several other warriors none more so than the Jiralhanae.

"No." Thel told him with a sigh of frustration. "Keep an eye on him. We may need to pull him out by force if need be." Raukee nodded as he cut the screen. Another screen was appeared, this one being an image of Naruto standing around a bunch of dead men. Just by his body language alone, it was clear to tell that he was angered about something. _You had better have a goodâ€¦_ Thel stopped to stare at the image as a Demon appeared on the screen. _Soâ€¦_ that's your reason. _"Make ready all weapons. We will be glassing the planet in a few minutes."

"Yes sir," Fin told them.

Thel looked up at the screen again. Sorrow was in his eyes. _You're not doing this to prove your skills to us. You're doing this for revenge. _

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Naruto stared down the barrel of the Battle Rifle that Ralph had. Naruto snorted at him. He opened fire. Naruto jumped into the air, his hands twitching to grab his rifle before dropping down in front of him. Naruto knocked his rifle away, and punched him in the chest. Ralph grabbed his wrist before he could hit him, and threw him away. Naruto jumped when he attempted to throw him, and reversed the grip as while staring down at the Demon. Ralph might have been growling in anger at the fact that Naruto was proving to be more of a challenge than what he'd first thought.

Naruto landed down behind the Spartan. He cocked a fist back, and then jumped forward into a roll as the giant of a man swung around

with his fist out. He missed Naruto. Naruto leaned down onto his hands, and planted a foot into his ribs. His kick did little to him, but the impact was enough to throw him backwards a bit. Ralph took two more steps backward, pulled out his holstered M6G Pistol, and took aim. Naruto was already in front of him, a fist cocked back ready to fly. Ralph reached out with his other hand, stopping Naruto's fist before pointing the pistol at his head. He fired. Naruto tilted his head to the side, dodging the metallic slug.

Naruto head butted him in the face, his head hurting more than his opponent. Ralph aimed once more, this time suffering from having Naruto grab his wrist, and give it a twist. Ralph broke the hold before any damage could be done, and grabbed Naruto's wrist. He gave it a twist. Naruto broke out of the hold before he could snap it, and palmed him in the chest. Ralph couldn't stop the blow, and took it in the chest. It hurt a lot worse than the kick. A hand print was left from the force behind it, and he felt a few of his ribs shatter from the blow.

Naruto rushed forward, and Ralph grabbed hold of his wrist again when he threw a punch. In one motion, he tossed Naruto over him, and watched him smash into a broken down Warthog. A dent was left in it, and Naruto began to slowly get up, his bone giving off an audible crack as he stood up. Ralph rushed him, and decked him in the head. Naruto ducked under it though, and punched him in the torso. The Spartan recoiled from the blow before Naruto threw him into the Warthog. The vehicle was now dented in big time, and the Spartan got up, twisting the metal support from the window out, and swung it at Naruto.

The makeshift weapon smashed into Naruto's side, and swatted him away. Naruto skidded along the ground before getting up quickly. The Spartan jumped towards him, gripping the weapon tight enough to leave deep imprint marks in it as he swung it again. Naruto caught it with one hand, and yanked it free from his grasp before swinging it at him. It smacked him across the face before he could bring his arms up to stop him. Naruto swung again. Ralph brought his arms up this time, stopping the weapon. He grabbed it, and tore it from his grip. However, Naruto didn't let go, and was thrown at him as well. He smashed a fist into his face, sending the half a ton Spartan falling backwards. He rolled with the blow, and got up with a cracked faceplate. Naruto punched him again, this time hitting him in the shoulder as he turned to brace for the blow. Naruto cracked part of his armor, a grin appearing on his lips as he watched blood leak from it.

Ralph hissed in pain as he backhanded him away. Naruto was sent flying backwards, but managed to do a backhand spring to correct the fall so he didn't hit his head. He looked up, and started staring at the half a ton of Spartan as he lifted an AIE-486H HMG Machine Gun. The barrel began to spin, and bullets began flying. Naruto began running around, dodging the barrage of slugs. He took cover behind a broken Hornet. Its plating could withstand most of the barrage, but its damaged plating was now a thin plating, and could barely withstand the barrage of bullets. It didn't take it long for it to start punching through, and when it did they were only a few inches away from him.

Ralph continued the barrage until the barrel began clicking. It was

out. Naruto jumped over the remains of the Hornet and ran at full speed towards the man. Ralph grabbed the barrel of the weapon, and swung it at Naruto as he charged him. Naruto dropped to his knees, dodging the blow and punched him in the crotch, and the Spartan felt it hard. Even if he was a Spartan, a genetically altered human meant to go toe to toe with the best of the Covenant, they were still human, and they were still men. Ralph winced in pain as he doubled over from the cheap shot before Naruto uppercut him, sending him a good foot off the ground.

Ralph was quickly over the pain, but it was too late. Naruto had punched him into the air and kicked him in the gut when he began his decent back to the ground. His blow hit harder this time, and Naruto's leg bent in from the blow before the Spartan hit the ground, clutching his stomach. Naruto began beating him anew with even more anger in his eyes. The Spartan could hardly stop him. Naruto managed to yank his helmet off, and begin beating his face in. He had blond hair, and blue sapphire eyes.

Ralph groaned in pain before he managed to punch him in the head, knocking him off of him. Naruto rolled to his feet, grabbed the Machine Gun he had tried to hit him with, and slammed it into his body, sending him skidding into the metal and concrete wall of the building they were in. It shattered, and he went fully through it when Naruto tackled him out into the sand. They rolled around before Ralph kicked him away. It was then that the three suns that the planet orbited around hit them, momentarily blinding them from the bright light that they gave off.

They both recovered at the same time, and continued their match. Naruto punched him across the face, his jaw nearly breaking from the blow. Ralph spun with the blow as he brought both hands together to hit him hard. Naruto was hit in the stomach, and thrown back into the sand. As he rolled to his feet, the hiss of ionized gasses sounded, and the sand around Naruto's feet turned to glass as two Energy Blades formed from his feet.

Ralph looked around for a weapon, but found none. It was still an even fight.

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Raukee watched in wonder. He had fought these Demons before. Shammed by them he was. Defeated twice in battle by them, and pushed back three other times. Ahielee and the others had been forced to pull him out when facing them against his will. But to watch as Naruto fought toe to toe with him his mind was at wonders wondering if any more like him could be found. How he wished that there were more like him. An army of people like Naruto he couldn't dream of the possibilities.

"Raukee, do you think we should help?" Raukee looked over at his Sangheili friend for a moment before looking back at the fight. He shook his head. Though he wanted to help him, he knew that Naruto was doing this for what the UNSC had done to his world.

"No. He's doing this for what they did his world." He told him sadly. The Unggoy looked down at the fight, a few trembling at what they saw. Raukee closed his eyes, and reflected on what he had been forced into telling Naruto when the news got back to him after traveling to

his world.

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Naruto swung his fist in a wide arc, slamming it against Ralph's head, sending him into the sand. Ralph was back on his feet before Naruto could deliver a killing blow. Naruto saw this, and did a roundhouse kick. Ralph ducked under it. Naruto growled, and repeated it, this time aiming to take his legs off with his boot blades. Ralph jumped over it. Naruto stopped, put his hands in the ground, and kicked him in the jaw. Blood flew from his mouth as a few of his teeth were knocked out, and he bit his tongue off at the tip. Ralph rolled with the blow as he hit the ground, and got back to his feet. Naruto rushed him again. Ralph threw a punch, and Naruto caught it.

He was wearing him down.

Ralph didn't scream in pain when Naruto broke his wrist with a sickening snap. He was a Spartan. He was strong. Naruto kicked him back to the ground, his blades digging deep into his armor. Naruto twisted his foot bit, melting the armor before cutting off the other arm that still had a hand with his boot blade. Now Ralph screamed in pain. Naruto grabbed him by the head, and picked him up to his eye level before punching him in the face several more times.

With tears in his eyes, he whispered out, "Why did you destroy my world?" before snapping his neck, and removing his head. The corpse hit the ground, and Naruto threw his head back to let out a loud roar of pain. His red holy light flung around him as it melted the sand into glass. A single tail formed. Then another formed. And then another. Three tails formed, and Naruto flung two transparent arms at the rest of the building, demolishing it before retracting both arms. When they came back, one arm held the helmet of the Spartan, and the other held slew of crystals. His holy light faded away, and he let out a loud sigh of frustration. "I'm ready for pick up. The humans that could not flee have taken cover in the inner workings of the planet to wait for us to leave." He told them over his Team Com. A moment later, a Phantom appeared to pick him up.

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Naruto stared down at the Spartan helmet in his hands as he sat in his quarter's onboard Red Dawn. He sighed as he closed his eyes. He gently placed the helmet on his nightstand, and sighed again as he looked around his room. It wasn't much, but it was roomy for him. It was far better than his old home back on his world. At least he was respected here. His room was nice, and he didn't have to worry about it being too cold or too hot because the temperature gauge didn't work. On his nightstand was a small set of scrolls that read about his history, and what he was. On his desk where he kept his spar clothes were, was a set of crystals, small Covenant Tech that either played music or were movie devices. Beside them were small black objects that he had saved from his world. VHS Tapes was written into them along with a set of names.

They were all he had of his world.

Naruto looked over at the scrolls and then placed his head in his hands as he began crying. One of them was opened up, an image of his

hero, and a young woman with red hair, a smile so bright it always made him smile and a big belly. It was his parents. After reading through the scrolls, he had learned that he was what the older generation called a Jinchuuriki. After learning this, he went to the Prophets, requesting that they accept him as a Jinchuuriki rather than a human. He wasn't a human. Not in his eyes anyways. Not even the Sangheili believed him to be a human. They didn't really understand what Jinchuuriki meant, but he wanted to keep it that way. He figured that they would think less of him if they knew his own father had sealed the demon in him.

After reading the scrolls and learning the UNSC had destroyed his world; he could do nothing but cry. So he cried tonight. He cried for his mother that had died while giving birth to him. He cried for his father that had died to save the village that hated him. He cried for the people that he failed to protect.

4. Chapter 4

Rtas 'Vadumee stared at Naruto as he kept his eyes closed. Naruto had asked him for a meeting. The meeting was supposed to be short and to the point. It was supposed to be subtle. However, anything that involved talking with Naruto, often ended with something being broken, whether it was then or just later on. So, he could honestly say that he wasn't surprised when Naruto's holy powers activated, and he slammed an angry fist into the thick metal table in front of him, producing a large dent with a tiny hole in the center of it as he open his bloodshot eyes.

"What do you mean he's being charged with heresy?!" Naruto shouted as loud as he could. Rtas stared him down a blank stare. He looked bored as he watched Naruto glare at him with three holy tails twitching wildly. Without his mask, his appearance was far more frightening than when he wore his mask. Yet Rtas was able to stare him down at the moment.

Rtas took a calm intake of air before speaking. "Thel has been charged with heresy for allowing humans to land on the sacred ring, destroy it, and for losing a ship to the humans. It is an unfortunate call, but he is being charged with heresy. He will be going before the council to plead his caseâ€¦ but I doubt it will do him any good. His actions have led his Keep into disgrace. They are being investigated for heresy as well. His titles will be stripped regardless of what we say. I will be there to make sure he doesn't try anything, but I will pass along your expressions about this case."

"Who would disgrace someone like him?" Naruto glared at him as he punched the table again.

Rtas held his gaze with him, not frightened by his display of power. "The council was the first to suggest this, and the Prophet Hierarchs followed soon after. Regret was the one to suggest his heresy. We were ordered to take him before the conclave for his crimes."

Naruto's tails stopped twitching long enough for his whole body to begin quaking with rage before they burned the walls with a large X slashed into it. "But I am on Regret's carrier as we speak! How or

why would he even want to hold a meeting while we are about to face down the heretics on their home world!"

And this was why Rtas could honestly say he was calm. Were he not at High Charity at the moment, he would have beaten Naruto within an inch of his life, no matter what kind of immunity he had, and put him in his place. Rtas was appearing before him as a hologram for the meeting that Naruto had requested. He had half expected Naruto to ask him to help him in his quest, but he also expected him to just shout at him about Thel's current situation. Thel put his hands together as he leaned forward. "You had best focus on your task then, Uzumakiee. It would not look well for you to fail your most holy assignment to date."

Naruto's tails twitched in anger before he calmed down, his holy power leaving him. Once he returned to normal, Rtas closed his eyes. Naruto was now able to be reasoned with. "I understand, Rtas. I will complete my mission, and return to High Charity when we've destroyed these heretics. Forgive me for my heated words. I shall leave you now." Naruto nodded to him, and Rtas returned it before his image flickered and faded away. Naruto swung an angry fist once more into the table, and sighed while walking out of the room.

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It sounded like gun fire as fast as she typed. Her tiny hands worked the keyboard like magic as she typed in all sorts of data that had recently been uncovered. Well, she couldn't say that she had uncovered it, but she had uncovered a good portion of it. Dr. Anders had helped out a lot, and with Dr. Halsey's strange disappearance some time ago, things had been moving just a bit slower than usual. Dr. Halsey had been the main one to train her in working with computers, understanding other languages, and helping her understand and look for Forerunner tech. Had it not been for her, she might have ended up as another one of Colonel Ackerson's Spartan III's that had been created after the fall of her world.

"What are you doing up this early?" A voice questioned. She stopped typing as Ander's leaned over her shoulder to stare at the mathematical data she had on her laptop, along with all the other screens that were showing previously found or stolen Forerunner tech. She sighed heavily as she calmly pushed her from her shoulder, making the older woman chuckle a bit. "You're as bad as me when I was your age." She admitted. She took a sip of coffee while handing another cup to her. She took it gratefully before taking a few sips. "So what are we looking at this time?"

She rolled her pearl colored eyes before speaking. "It's not like you can't tell for yourself, but, I'll enlighten you just this once." She pointed to a few holographic images of the ring world that had been downloaded from Cortana's memory logs during their adventures on the first structure of Halo. "These ruins here have some of the same symbols we've seen at few of the other worlds we once controlled. Some of the video logs from your adventures in this area also have some of the same symbols, along with some similarities that I just noticed." Ander's nodded approvingly as she watched the younger woman type on the keyboard.

Numbers flashed over the screens as she picked up certain files that she need on the computer before images appeared again. The new images

showed pictures of odd robotic creatures that had three booms with a central eye that was cherry red when it fired a high focused laser beam. Spartan-117 had dealt with these things in mass numbers, and after giving a detailed debriefing on their weapons, and a few that he somehow managed to bring back, it was quite clear that if they could turn them against the Covenant, they might have a better chance of winning the war. However, from the video logs of the fights with them from John, and from his debriefing, he seemed most certain that they only listened to their maker, 343 Guilty Spark.

"These things, which are called Sentinels-

"Which we know all about," Ander's pointed out after taking a sip of coffee.

"-have personal shields that can deflect incoming high speed projectiles. However, if you were to throw something a lot slower than a bullet—say, a rock, then the shields will not come online as we first believed they would." Ander's looked impressed by that. "However, they make up for this by being very intelligent. During the debriefing, John informed us that after killing only ten of them, they managed to learn how to not only track him, but to also force him back by doing suppressive fire, hunting in pairs, and by patrolling at a much high altitude." She had a triumphant grin as she turned to face her, her lab swaying a bit as she turned the chair around. Ander's smiled a bit.

"You're getting better at this, Hinata. A few more years, and you might just be better at understanding Forerunner tech better than I can." Hinata smiled. That was what she hoped for. Ander's, took the seat beside her, and began digging in her lab coats' pockets for something. When she found what she was looking for, she smiled and pulled it out while turning her back to her. "Dear Diary, I thought about him again last night. I wonder where he's been since the attack on our world. I still can't believe that the UNSC decided to call my home world, Shinobi World. I wonder if he even made it off of the world before fire rained down on us from the skies. I hope that Ackerson didn't get his slimy hands on him. I can't think of him being used as a personal weapon." Hinata's left eye began to twitch as she stood up, and tried to snatch the diary away from her. Ander's jumped out of her chair, and ran away with it, Hinata in hot pursuit of the thief.

(-)

Bang. "Fuck." Bang. "Fuck!" Bang. "FUCK!" Bang. "OH FOR GODS SAKE!"

"Man, you really suck with any gun given to you." A female replied. A tan colored man in full Semi-Powered Infiltration armor (SPI armor) and his newly hardened plates and photo-reflective panels made him nearly blend in with the white walls around them. SPI Armor was a cut down version of the MJOLNIR Armor that the Spartan II's wore. SPI armor relied more heavily on stealth rather than brute force like the MJOLNIR armor did. Being cost efficient meant cut backs, and the SPI armor was a major cut back. A single Spartan II and MJOLNIR armor could buy a single Frigate. With the SPI armor, and the Spartan III's however, you could hardly buy enough plating to cover a Frigate.

The teal colored man turned to face her, his face plate making it hard to tell if he was glaring at her or not. She figured he was. Like him, she wore the same suit of armor, but whereas his was teal, hers' was a dark a purple almost blue. Like him, she also had a number stenciled into the side of her shoulder. She had the number 2 stenciled in while he had the number 1. They weren't rank actually. Though most believed it was, it wasn't. It wasn't even bragging rights either. For them, it was being in the reverse top ten, list. The higher the number, the more powerful they were.

"Alright then, let's see you do better." He growled. He tossed her his SRS 99D AM Sniper Rifle. She caught, and in short order, blew up the four targets he'd been aiming at for the past two minutes. He didn't gawk at her rapid display of accuracy. Instead, he just accepted it. Guns were never his thing. He couldn't hit the broad side of a barn at point blank range. Ambrose had even forbid him from using firearms during their time at Onyx. He wasn't actually surprised by this anyways. Lots of the other Spartan III's from Gamma Company had this problem, but they had quickly gotten over it. For him however, well—he was forbidden permanently from ever using a gun. Not like he cared anyways. He had no love for the damn things.

"I did better." She chirped.

"Shut up." He hissed while walking over to her. A taller man wearing a black version of the SPI armor appeared out of the doorway. Most Spartans even for Spartan III's, were huge. This guy was way bigger. His body growth due to all the enchantments and drugs that had been given to them during their training to become Spartan III's had not at all helped him. Even when they found him he was taller than the rest of them. And after taking all of the drugs, becoming a Spartan III, and getting all of the SPI armor upgrades, he was still huge, if not bigger than a Hunter. His SPI armor alone had been a major problem. They had to make his from scratch, redesign it for him personally. He, like them, had a number stenciled into the shoulder, his bearing the number 8 on it. He was the strongest one of them. He was also the leader of Team Jin

"We just got orders to standby at the ceremony for a possible attack." He told them in a chipper tone. The two arched their brows a bit at his chipper tone, but played it off as nothing new. He, like them, enjoyed nothing but fighting. That was all they were trained to do. That's all they knew how to do. It wasn't a pleasant thought to know that if they won the war, they would possible be frozen to await the next war.

"So what station are we heading to?" The yellow one asked. The tall man shook his head. Why was it that Spartan-G207 always asked for details? He wouldn't say that it wasn't just a Spartan thing. She was a woman, and since he knew they liked to have all the details, combined with the fact she was a Spartan, it was no wonder she wanted information.

"I think we're to be at the Athens for this. We're to provide support for the Marines there just in case the little bastards show up." Little? Yeah, for him maybe. "So— How's your shooting, Gaara?" Gaara gave him the finger, his teal armor nearly going invisible as he turned around and destroyed the remaining targets with his sand. The big man shook his head. "You know, it's because of your lack of

training with guns that led you to this problem." He told him.

"Kiri, shut up." He hissed.

"Gaara, grow up."

"Yugito, go to hell." Gaara walked off, feeling slightly victorious as he walked into the hanger bay of the stealth ship, _Knock 'Hem Up_. The door hissed closed, and the two Spartans sighed.

"Wellâ€¦ at least he expresses himself more." Kiri mumbled.

Yugito cut her eyes towards the towering giant. _At least you finally stopped that annoying rapping. _

(-)

"Where the hell are those two late bastards?!" Sergeant Tyler screamed as he looked over his squad of ODSs. One of them, a tall man with dark brown hair and a cigarette in his lips let out a deep sigh of frustration. He knew who their Sergeant was talking about, as did the rest of the squad. They wondered why he had court-martialed him yet for always being late, coming up with the craziest excuses, and for sleeping with one Admirals daughter. Then againâ€¦

"Sorry I'm late everyone." The two appeared, and everyone cut their eyes towards them, a few snickering as Tyler asked for his reasons on being late. It was pretty clear on why the young woman with purple hair was late, but he wanted to hear his story, not hers'. "Well, you see I was on my way over here when I ran across a black cat. I decided that since I don't want bad luck that I would walk around the cat. When I got to the next empty cart, I found that it was broken down. So I was forced to take the stairs to get up here. After which, I came right here, only to find that the previous cat was now up here. So I was once again forced to walk around the same cat, Sir." Tyler shook his head while his men began punching their guts to get their laughter under control.

"Hatakeâ€¦ THAT WAS THE WORST LIE I'VE EVER HEARD!" He screamed so loud that his short cut silver hair flew wildly at the force of it. Yep, Hatake Kakashi stood before them, an eye patch over his left eye, and a black cloth over his nose and mouth to keep it from view. Most people wanted to see what was under it while others just didn't give a damn. But because of his actions, most of the other teams had started a running joke that was probably very true.

"Kakashi, you ARE going to be late to your own funeral. I swear you will, man." The chain smoker told him. His friend cut his one eye towards him Tyler ordered them to get in line.

"Asuma, you need to find yourself a girl."

"You need to grow up."

"I think Asuma needs more than just a girl." The purple haired ODS told them with a snake-like grin.

"Anko, you need to stop acting so childish." The two said in unison.

"That's not what you said last night." She jabbed him in the gut with an elbow.

(-)

People cheered happily as they approached. One was dressed in his white Marine uniform, the other dressed in half a ton of MJOLNIR armor. Cameras rotated to catch them in motion as they approached the metal double doors of the MAC Gun/Station they were on. Cairo, as it was called, was one of the many orbital defense systems that were in place around Earth. Capable of putting a slug clean through a Capital Ship, they were the most heavily powered weapon in the UNSC besides a Spartan.

"You told me I wasn't going to be in the cameras." Spartan-117, John, growled.

"And you told me you were going to wear something nice." Avery Johnson, a longtime friend, told him. "Folks need heroes Chief. Give them hope." He smoothed his cut hair before putting his cap back on. "So smile will yeah, while we still have something to smile about."

(-)

Regret's fleet came out of Slipspace, far enough away from the planet to not be hit by the slug rounds from their massive MAC Guns that orbited the planet. They hadn't brought many ships, mostly because he believed there wouldn't be many humans here. He was wrong. Initial scans quickly proved that he was wrong. But after coming all this way with his fleet, he was most certain that they could still kill them.

"Release our fighters. Take out their orbiting weapons first to clear the line for our Cruisers to take them out. We shall rain fire down on these heretics, and destroy them all. For the glory of the Covenant!" There was a loud cry of joy from every Sangheili, Kig-yar, Unggoy, Lekgolo, and one Jinchuuriki as they boarded their boarding crafts. Regret smiled. It was finally done. After this world was burned, the Jinchuuriki known as Naruto was going to be treated as a heretic, just like he planned. Once he was dead, all traces of the Reclaimers would be purged from this world, securing that their faith and history was right.

(-)

Alarms began screaming as large blimps appeared on the screens behind Cortana's holographic image. It was a large fleet, but it was a fleet, and they were Covenant. Seeing them so soon made her worry for a fraction of a second, which, in AI terms of time, is a rather long time. People began running to their stations in a mad panic to get ready for the attack. John looked around, mostly to find a weapon. He couldn't see one that wasn't either bolted down or very important to the station.

"_This is Fleet Admiral Harper. We are engaging the enemy." _

Lord Hood turned to the board as it displayed a fleet of UNSC ships heading straight for the enemy ranks. "Negative. Pull back and await

further instructions." He looked down at the AI. "Cortana, you have the MAC Gun. As soon as they come in range, open up." She nodded to him. Hood turned to face the group half way while muttering, "Something's not right. The fleet that destroyed Reach was fifty times this size."

"Sir, boarding craft! And lots of them!"

"They're going to try to take our MAC Guns offline." He whispered. "Master Chief, defend this station!" Hood walked off, leaving a happy Spartan and Sergeant behind.

"Yes Sir!" John looked over at his friend. "I need a weapon."

"Right this way." Johnson sang happily.

(-)

Onboard the Athens, Kakashi, Asuma, Anko, and the rest of their squad braced for what they knew was going to be a hell of a fight. Despite being former ninjas, they still were able to hone their skills to a high degree. As of right now, they were on the ceiling with their Battle Rifles pointed at a potential entrance as they watched a Covenant boarding craft head straight for them, its blue plasma already cutting a hole into the side of it.

(-)

Spartan Team Jin stood pertinently at the large bulkhead doors that were glowing bright red as Covenant techs melted it with high focused lasers. Yugito held a pair of M7/Caseless Submachine Guns in both hands. Kiri was holding an AIE-486H HMG Machine Gun. Gaara had his sand spread out over the entire hot zone. As soon as the doors hit the ground, plasma began flying, followed shortly by plasma grenades and return fire from the three Spartans. Yugito however, stopped to reload while Kiri continued to lay down massive fire on the doors, forcing the Covenant to take cover. While she reloaded, she felt something odd above them, her senses and a voice in the back of her mind screaming something about a fox.

(-)

Naruto stared at the large bomb that they had brought with them as he waited for the ship to make contact with the station. As soon as they did, the Unggoy along with a few minor Sangheili began pulling the heavy spike-looking bomb into the chamber they were in. Naruto didn't pay attention to the surroundings for very long before a massive headache from a very angry fox suddenly started screaming at him about a Neko, Tanuki, and Ushi-Oni.

Raukee turned to his friend, worry in his eyes as he approached him. "What's the matter?"

"There here." The ceiling exploded, and three figures dropped down with a loud thud, denting the floor as they hoisted their guns.

"Hi," The tallest one said happily. "We've been waiting for you, Kyuubi."

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Yugito lowered the report with an angry sighed of frustration. "You have got to be kidding me." She growled. The man in front of her shook his head. Though he was actually nearly sixty years old, he really looked twice that. His hair had turned white with partial balding, and his eyes were surrounded by bags, and the weight of his wrinkled skin. He shook his head sadly.

"I'm afraid not. We checked, rechecked, rechecked, and rechecked it several times before coming up with that conclusion." She placed the photos of a single, Elite, though shorter than any they had ever seen, with a red aura wrapped around its body. Other photos had the same thing, though with actually Elites around the smaller one. At first glance, anyone would mistake him for one with the armor he wore, and just assume he was a child. Like a prodigy of her world, or what's left of it now.

Kiri stepped forward, shaking his head. "But all the reports said that the ninth Jinchuuriki was never found. Hell, we all would have known about him when we left. He had to have died. Hinata gave a full report about what she saw the villagers doing to him on the night of his disappearance, and the same time the UNSC came to us to offer aid when the Covenant began using your ships against our world. I was there when she gave the report." He protested.

"It could have been a staged Op for all we know." Gaara added. Kiri said nothing to him.

"It doesn't matter. We have Intel that hasn't yet been confirmed, but there is a chance that a Covenant fleet is heading to Earth. We need you to get there, and help defend it at all costs." He told them. Yugito arched a brow from inside her helmet. The old man must have known what she was thinking when he suddenly voiced her thoughts. "I know that you were trained to keep off the radar, as the Spartan III project was meant to be a heavily classified secret. However, with the new AI's coming out; they have begun to find leaks and holes in our defense around the Spartan III project. If you are spotted, stick to the cover that we've given you. I'm sure you'll know what to do."

"But what about the target. What if he shows? What should we do?" Yugito asked. The old man gave her a warning glare. Spartans weren't supposed to ask questions about orders. These Spartans were different. They weren't like Team Fire Shadow or Hell Fire. They at least listened to orders and did them without question. That was how a Spartan should act. Besides, the Spartan III's were actually designed solely for suicide missions. High value targets that could keep the Covenant back for days, maybe even weeks, with the only loses being the Spartan III's. That was there purpose. Disposable heroes as Ackerson had said.

"You have your orders. Capture him if possible. Kill him if need be. The stealth Frigate _Knock 'Hem Up_ will be your transport to Earth. Also, Team Fire Shadow will be with you. Your target is the Kyuubi. Be careful. I think you're really going to need it." He nodded towards the door, and the three walked out after giving him a

salute.

(-)

Yugito rushed Naruto as quickly as she could, closing the gap between them faster than the eye could blink. Naruto had only a second to dodge before her fist nearly knocked his head off. He ducked under the blow. He swung a fist into her gut, forcing the air from her lungs, and sending her skidding backwards before charging him again. Sand wrapped around her, protecting her from a volley of needler rounds from a Needler carrying Unggoy. His sand lashed out at the Grunt, and then crushed him before heading towards Rauk as he fired bolts of hot blue plasma at him. Gaara's sand couldn't withstand the heat, and was turned into glass. Kiri jumped down in front of the Sangheili, blocking them from Naruto as he began firing the remainder of his belt at them. They took cover behind the massive bomb that they brought, its hard casing providing the best support to hide from the rounds. As soon as he emptied it, he turned around, and smashed a fist into the back of Naruto's head as he fought with Yugito. The force of the blow knocked him through the not so hard or stable floor, and down to the next floor.

"Take care of the Elites!" Kiri shouted as he, along with the rest of his team jumped down into the hole.

Ahielee was the first to come out his cover, his Carbine at the ready. He looked left, then right, then up, and then towards the shadows before rounds began pinging off the bomb to his right from behind a mass of pipes, crates, and opened door. What stood behind the crate was another Spartan III, this one wearing the normal colors, but with Leaf symbol stenciled into the shoulder. Three more appeared, each having the same symbol. One was wielding an MA5C ICWS Assault Rifle. The one at the door was wielding a pair of Submachine Guns. The one behind the door the corridor had a Sniper Rifle. The one in front of the crates was hefting a M90A CAWS Shotgun.

"Move out," The shotgun user ordered as he opened fire. His rounds smacked a Grunt right in the face, tearing more than half of it off.

(-)

Naruto slammed down into the floor with a loud thud, denting the metal floor with ease. He quickly jumped to his feet, ready for anything. He wasn't ready for a purple holy arm to grab him or drag him along the rough metal walls of the station before being thrown up against a few of the canisters that were the ammunition for the MAC Guns. Naruto jumped back to his feet, his single tail forming as he stared at the three around him. The one that had thrown him was the purple one, and she had two holy tails behind her. She raised her twin guns.

"Do you know what I am?"

"A Demon." Naruto hissed. She shook her head.

"We're just like you. We're what our people used to call Jinchuuriki. We are the power of a human sacrifice. Your father is Namikaze Minato. You were the son of the strongest man in the Village Hidden by the Leafs." Gaara corrected.

Naruto's eyes widened as he remembered the name of his former village. Survivors had been found! But how?! And why were they working for the UNSC? Didn't they know that it was the heretics that had destroyed their world? So why would they help them? Naruto's eyes turned red as he figured out why his world had to suffer. "The humans of this world have misled you." The three sighed. This was going to complicate things. "They destroyed our world because they think our power is wrong. They are using you because they are afraid of what we are. Join us, I can guarantee you safety in the Covenant." He held out a hand.

They shook their heads. "You're the one that has been misled." Gaara told him bluntly. "It was the Covenant that burned our home world. I should know I was on the cruiser, _ Eagle Shooter _when the Brutes boarded it to destroy our world with the MAC Guns. Believe me, I know what I saw!"

"You saw wrong!" He slammed his hands into the metal floor. It heated and cooled quickly as two trails of raised metal raced towards Kiri and Gaara. "HERETICS!" Two red arms shot out of the metal floor, both trying to grab the two male Jinchuuriki. They avoided it with shinobi reflexes and heightened Spartan reflexes. Heightened Spartan reflexes plus shinobi reflexes made them very fast. Naruto growled in anger as he lifted his arms up, three tails forming instantly as he blocked one of Yugito's punches before she twisted in the air, and kicked him in the head, sending him crashing through the weakened metal floor. Kiri jumped down, eight holy tails forming instantly. Naruto's eyes shot open, and he rolled away as the dark skinned man slammed a fist into the ground. He tore through the floor with ease, and had an easier time pulling his arm out while tearing out a chunk of the floor.

"If you won't listen to reason." He whispered sadly. "Then we'll just have to kill you. I'm sorry it has to be this way. We could have stopped the Covenant together. I would have liked that." He swung the chunk of metal, and Naruto ducked under it. Kiri missed, but he wasn't actually aiming for Naruto. His makeshift weapon collided with a barrel, and sand began to spill out of it. Gaara raised his hands as though he was ordered a mass of people to cheer for him. The sand reacted, and lashed out at Naruto. It swirled around him. The hiss of ionized gasses sounded, and the sand began to turn to glass in long lines as it surrounded him.

"Goodbye, Kyuubi." Gaara closed his fist, and the sand began to constrict him. As it began to tighten around him, the glass turned sand began to expand, and Gaara began to worry before his sphere of sand was nothing but a thick slab of glass. "There's no way he-" A blast of red holy light blew apart the glass, sending large chunks of steaming hot glass sailing towards the sand user. His sand came back to him, momentarily providing a safe defense before he was forced to remove it to see. Naruto appeared in front of him, an Energy Sword charged up. His sand formed a shield in front of his face, but the super hot plasma weapon turned it to glass, and went through his head. Gaara didn't scream or anything. His blood sizzled against the weapon before he fell over dead.

"Gaara!" Yugito cried. Her two tails began waving around angrily as Naruto turned to face her, take a moment to pull out the other Plasma Sword. The ionized hiss of gasses and plasma signaled its activation.

He stared down the Nibi Jinchuuriki as she pulled her two SMGs. She fired. Naruto took the brunt of the barrage as he ran straight at her, dodging only a few shots before he was able to get in front of her. She jumped back. Her weapons clanked empty, and she cursed her luck. Naruto appeared in front of her, one arm pulled back ready to stab her. She grabbed his wrist while twisting around the attack, and kicked him in the stomach. Naruto coughed up blood, but used his three tails to swat her away before she could break his arm. She bounced off the bulkhead, putting a big dent in it before hitting the ground. Her photo-reflective plates crackled and hissed as sparks lined up the suit.

It was failing her now.

Kiri charged Naruto. Naruto jumped back, his boot blade activating. Kiri jumped towards Yugito to avoid his attack. Naruto activated his other boot blade, and ran at him. Kiri spread both arms out wide, ready to take him, his eight tails swaying angrily as Naruto prepared to stab him. The station rocked, and threw the three to the ground. Naruto got up first thanks to a quick roll, and ran towards the still dazed and confused neko holder. She staggered around before she was able to see Naruto try to take her head off with his swords. She ducked. Naruto swore under his breath. She punched him in the stomach with enough force to knock him off his feet, and about two feet into the air. Naruto flipped in midair, and landed down on his feet before charging her again. A holy arm expanded, and slammed him into the side of the room, denting the bulkhead, pipes, and destroying control stations. Gasses hissed loudly as they released their coolant meant to keep the MAC Gun cool while it continuously fired.

The arm dragged him across it before fire broke out from above, forcing the Hachibi Jinchuuriki to take cover. Yugito was forced to do the same. Naruto saw his opening. The strike team from above continued to rain down a barrage of plasma, needler shards, and blue and green plasma. Naruto jumped over the crate where Yugito had been hiding, and found nothing. A fist slammed into his gut, throwing him backwards, and sent him sprawling over the crate and onto the ground. A foot slammed into his stomach, forcing him to roll away. Plasma erupted where the foot had made contact with him, and a figure appeared. It was Yugito.

"Switch to EMV!" Naruto ordered as his visor lit up. The Sangheili growled out a few curses, most of which were something about it not be honorable. Naruto ignored them, and found Yugito and Kiri running at him. The station shook again, this time throwing Ahriel down into the pit. He landed with a loud thud, and shook off the concussion of the fall before pulling out a Plasma Sword of his own. The two stood back to back. Naruto was able to see them clear as day, and he knew that they knew it. They had no weapons. Yugito's weapons were empty. Kiri had no other weapons other than his fists. This was still an even fight.

(-)

Kakashi stared blankly at the fleeing Grunts and Jackals with his head cocked to the side. Asuma was holding his stomach where a Plasma Pistol had nicked him. Anko was dead. Two crystal shards lodged into her spine at the back of her neck. Kakashi shook his head. "Something's wrong. I've never seen them run like that."

Asuma looked over at his friend, their helmets blocking the view of the other's face. "We'll, maybe they just got-" Heat washed over them, and everything went black. The Athens had been destroyed.

(-)

John, a few ODSs, and a couple of Marines watched with wide eyes as the Athens blew apart. Tiny fragments of the once tall and ominous station began raining down on the planet. His fist clenched tightly as he watched marines and ODSs that had managed to survive the blast without being evaporated by it, fall towards the planet. There was nothing they could do. Even if they left right now to pick them, up, it wouldn't do anything.

"Chief, it's a bomb. Find it!" Lord Hood told him.

(-)

Spartan-G310, Rafter, flew back against the support beams, the sharp metal piercing his broken body with ease. He coughed up blood as he pulled out a grenade, pulled the pin, and threw it just as a Plasma grenade landed on his face. He closed his eyes before it went off. Thunder and heat consumed him, and nothing was left of him. Raukee pulled his other Plasma Rifle out, and began giving his team cover fire as the last two Spartans took cover. With their squad mates now dead, it made them much easier to be taken out.

The last two Spartans jumped out of cover, both running as fast as they could towards the two remaining Sangheili and single Unggoy. The Unggoy threw a Plasma grenade. It stuck to the chest of the one on the left. He made mad dash for him, and jumped at the last second. His body vanished in a flash of thunder and heat, along with Unggoy.

The last Spartan picked up the Plasma Sword that was on the ground, his legs pumping fast before the ground suddenly exploded upwards with a red transparent arm pushing Kiri and Yugito into the ceiling. Metal shrapnel bounced and pinged off his armor before a large chunk of molten metal struck him in the chest. His body was thrown back from the blast, and he died.

Naruto and Ahielee came out of the hole, both covered with chips and soot marks on their armor. The two Jinchuuriki looked at the new Sangheili that came in. They had no choice. The battle was lost. They quickly retreated, and Naruto watched them leave. A blue Sangheili ran forward to go after them, but Naruto grabbed him by the shoulder, stopping him. "They are Demons! They must die for destroying our sacred ring! We must bring honor back to Thel-" The Sangheili went flying back as Naruto backhanded him away. He lay on the ground, his eyes wide in fright as Naruto stalked over to him.

"I am in charge while you are here. I outrank you." He hissed. "If I stop you, I expect you to obey it. Understand me?" The Sangheili nodded. The new Sangheili stared at their comrade before looking up at Naruto. "I just outrank him. I don't outrank Raukrr." He explained.

They nodded as a red Sangheili began activating the bomb. "We must

leave. The bomb is ready to go."

"Then let us not overstay our welcome." Raukee spoke as they returned to their craft. Naruto tossed a few grenades at the doors, melting them with the heat from the plasma, ensuring that it would be impossible to open. Once it was done, he jumped into the craft, and took his spot beside Ahielee. Raukee walked to the front of the craft, and placed a hand on the shoulder of the pilot. "We must be off. I do not wish to keep the Hierarch waiting." He explained.

The engines that had been in idle gave off a low roar as it disconnected its self from the hull of the station. The craft spun around as plasma and missiles arced across them, missing only by inches. The pilot pushed the orbs in, and the ship accelerated. He began making maneuvers to evade anti-air batters that might be on the stations. As they got farther away from the station, Raukee pulled out a small triangular device, and clicked the holographic symbol in the center of it. A blinding flash of light hit them from behind, and Naruto was forced to close his eyes as his visor couldn't polarize quickly enough to catch it. He hissed as tears screamed from his eyes. The Sangheili had their eyes closed to keep this from happening, but the surviving Unggoy stared at with interest.

"That takes care of that," Ahielee grumbled. He was happy to be out of the station, just as much as Naruto was. The two had fought hard against the Jinchuuriki pair, and came out on top. But they had escaped. Naruto was sure he'd be the one to end their lives. He didn't care. They were heretics for siding with the UNSC. They were traitors to his people and world. Ahiel placed a hand on his shoulder, causing Naruto to look up at him. "Who were those two, and why did they have the same holy power you have?"

"They are people like me, but they are heretics. Nothing more." The ship jerked as missiles exploded near them. A few of the Unggoy began crying.

"False Gods," One of them yelled angrily. "We shall see their blood spill for dishonoring you, Uzumakiee."

Naruto nodded.

Yes. They would pay with their blood for dishonoring the memories of his home world, even if the memories of his people were not good ones.

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"Give that back." Hinata finally got the diary away from Ander's. She looked slightly flustered that she read it out loud, but she knew that Ander's was just trying to cheer her up. Her boyfriend had been killed during the attack on Reach. She missed him, and never stopped thinking about him. But she had always had a place in her heart for the others that came to Earth with her from her world. She wondered where he was.

"So, was he someone special to you?" Hinata snapped from her thoughts, and rolled her eyes, deciding to walk back to her lab. "So when do I get to met him? Is he cute?"

"Iâ€|" Hinata stopped. She hadn't seen him in nearly twelve years.

She remembered him only because he was a good friend with Sakura Haruno, the medic onboard _Silent Night_. They had been friends for awhile before the day the UNSC came to rescue them from the Covenant attack on their world. Uchiha Sasuke was his name. She laughed. She knew his chances of being with Ackerson were high enough as it was. He was probable one of his lap dogs. She only even remembered him not just because Sakura always praised him, but because she had a photo of them back when they were kids. Childhood friends. She wondered if there were any other survivors from their world.

"Oh come on." She nudged her shoulder. "I'm sure I'd like him. Besides, you got me to hang out with. What's better than having me to hang out with?" Hinata had to admit, for an old lady nearly pushing fifty; she was more childish when she was back at a lab, on their base on Vorrac.

Vorrac was a small world that was still in the Inner Colonies, and wasn't very far from Earth. In fact, it was possibly the second closes planet that actually went around the same sun. Its planet had a stable atmosphere, regular temperature patterns similar to Earth, and had two small oceans. However, Vorrac also had a small cache of Forerunner tech that no one had ever managed to understand. This was where Professor Anders and Hinata came to when they had free time. Funny how they wanted to spend their free time doing work.

Vorrac had been found by Vorrac D. Trivet, an astronaut from way back. He had found the planet one day on Earth while looking through one of the five high power telescopes that could actually look past most of the other planets and moons towards other universes. They were very expensive to build, and even more expensive to keep in working order. But they were worth it back before they ran into the Covenant. Now they were decommissioned hunks of junk left to rot.

"Well, aside from you snooping around in my stuff" Hinata reached into Anders pockets, shocking her for a moment before pulling out a small set of crystals that began glowing brightly to her touch. "You do know how to party when we get actual time off." She walked into the room, screens lighting up as she went back to work. Anders smiled as she walked over to another terminal.

"I'm going to meet him," she told her. Hinata sighed. It was going to be a long thirty-two hour day. Oh yeah. That was the other thing about the planet. It had thirty-two hours of sunlight, and only six hours of darkness. Perfect conditions for the two of them.

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Their ship touched down in the hanger bay of _Holy Days_, and the strike team of Sangheili, Unggoy, and one Jinchuuriki stepped off. Naruto stretched his tired muscles before walking with his team towards the bridge of the ship. They still had to find the relic on the world before glassing the planet. Once they were down, they were going to be dealing with its search. Not a hard task. With their battle net in disarray, it would be easy for them to simply search for it. However, something always had to go screwy with the plans.

"Regret| Regret| Regret|" The name repeated several times

over the active com chatter.

Naruto pulled out a small chip, causing a few of the Kig-yar that had been rescued from their ships to stare at it in wonder. Naruto placed it in a portable radio receiver, and listened for anything from the humans. _"Catchy. What do you think it means?" _A female replied.

"_Dear humanity. We regret being alien bastards. We regret coming to Earth. And we most definitely regret that the Corp just blew up our raggedy ass fleet!" _

"_Whoa Ra!"_

Naruto looked up at the Sangheili that were crowded around him. Some looked worried that their leader would fall to the humans. Others looked on at the device as Naruto changed channels on it.

"_This is Spartan Silver Team. We've completed our mission. Heading out to the next hot zone. Over." _

Naruto messed with it some more. _"â€¦ down here as soon as you can, Team Jin. We'll need your help if he's still alive." _There was a long pause before the male voice spoke again. _"This is Spartan Team Dragon Fire. We'll be engaging the Covenant ship to stop Regret. Sasuke, out." _Naruto clicked the device off, and tossed it to a single Kig-yar.

"Keep listen on it. We'll need every advantage we can get." He walked off to get his equipment recharged for the next fight as their cruiser began dipping into the atmosphere of the planet. The ship shook a bit from its reentry, but it was nothing major for them to worry about. Raul and Ahriel followed him, well aware of what he was thinking. "We're hitting those two teams. The one that got away and the one that's down there right now."

"Remember that I am in charge." Raukee growled. Naruto nodded, and walked into the armory of the ship.

"Of course." Naruto picked up a small black device. It was shaped like a square, but had a hollow star in the center of it. "Raukee, we should take no chances with these Demons. The false Gods have my power as well. I will deal with them. But should you make contact with them, I don't give a damn about foolish pride and honor. I won't you to get to safety. You're my friend. And I don't like to go to their funerals so early in their lives." Raukee took one as well, handing them out to his team. Though they hated doing this, he had a valid point. If they had his power, they would need all the support and power they could get.

"We just got word from _Red Dawn_. They are sending two Scarabs to aid the Hierarch." Naruto looked over at the Sangheili. He wore golden armor. Naruto close his eyes. "The Prophet of Regret wishes that you come down to help him leave this world. He will be jumping into Slipspace as soon as his capacitors are fixed. His Slipspace engines were damaged during the initial attack, and he currently undergoing repairs. He wishes your team only. I'm to give you escort until we make contact with the enemy. Once we are down, we will be releasing fighters and others to aid the attack on their world. I've already got a Phantom prepped for your departure." He explained.

Naruto nodded his thanks, along with the others. The golden Zealot noted their Over shields, and shook his head in disgust.

Naruto watched him leave. Once the door hissed closed, he rolled his eyes. "I'd like to see him take on someone like me without an Over shield." No one said anything.

Raukee let out a low growl, and the team went back to the hanger bay.

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Dirt and dust flew into the air from the impact. The spot where they hit was smoldering hot, and yet as the hatches were blown off, the two, Spartan III's walked out like it was nothing new to them. Three, Spartan III's stood in perfect counter-sniping locations as they checked, rechecked, and rechecked again for any signs of the Covenant in the area. As soon as they were certain there were none, the leader of the three walked up to them.

"Sasuke, it's good to see you again." Yugito greeted. Spartan-G057, Sasuke, along with Spartan-G097, and -G187 walked up to them. He nodded while looking for the third pod. "Gaara didn't make it. He was killed by the Kyuubi." Sasuke shook his head, muttering a low curse as Kiri cracked his neck inside his suit. "We're going to complete our mission however. We're certain he'll come down here to finish us off. He called us," she motioned herself and Kiri with a single finger, "as heretics."

"Not surprising I suppose." Sasuke muttered. "Come on. We need to get moving before any Covenant show up to stop us. The last thing we need is for him to get in our way before we kill that bastard, Regret." They all nodded towards the leader of Fire Dragon Team as they began blinding in with the shadows and buildings around the now wrecked remains of New Mombassa. The Covenant cruiser was their target, and they'd be damned if anyone or anything was going to stop them.

A/N

Okay, before anyone chews my ass out, I wanna be perfectly clear. Athens didn't survive in Halo 2, and having a few ninja's wouldn't help either. Gaara's deathâ€¦ I think we all saw it coming the very minute I said he wasn't good with a gun. Also, before anyone chews me out, this is a Naruto Hinata fic. If you go back and read the last chapter, you'll see that I didn't mention the name of the person Anders was reading about while she had Hinata's diary. Also, this is where the story actually begins in a way. There were certain things in Halo 2 primarily that bugged the hell out of me. If you've read the books, it might bug you too, but I don't know. The last Oracle got very angry with the three soon to be Prophets about them doing everything wrong. So, when they showed us in Halo 2 that they got the information from Guilty Spark, I wanted to do sort of a side story with the Naruto guys.

Now that that's out of the way, I would also like to say that there will be no more jutsus in the story. Kakashi, Anko, and Asuma using chakra to stick to the surface of the station was something I wanted to do for the fun of it just to show you that they hadn't lost their touch. And they were the among the few adults to get off of the

planet before one side nuked the hell out of it.

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Hinata ran as quickly as she could. Her father was pulling her along as fire rained down on the village from the skies. No one knew what it was that was attacking, and most didn't care. All they cared about was getting away from it. Even as the fire rained down on their village, and the searing heat from the blasts that struck the earth around them became too much for her to bear, she kept her eyes on him. Dressed in a lime green suit of armor, he and his team, Blue Team, ran as quickly as they could, shooting Gorilla like beings dressed in armor. They ran through them, snapping necks, breaking limbs, stealing weapons, and just outright overpowering them.

They weren't shinobi. They weren't from their world. They were aliens. They were aliens that were trying to save them from a ship that had been overtaken by these monsters.

A blast from a floating ship in the sky sent them hurtling forward, head of heels before they landed down next to some turned over trees. One of the strange armor clad people came over to her, helping her stand back up while taking out another of the Gorilla monsters. He made it look easy; too easy actually. Shinobi were trying the damndest to take them. Fire jutsus didn't hardly anything to the ones with giant hammers. Water jutsus just angered them. Lightning jutsus made them hyperactive, and gave those wielding hammers more power. Earth jutsu were the most damaging. However, only a few shinobi had made it out of the village.

Looking over her shoulder, she found her escorts, along with all the other known survivors from Konoha, killing anything that came in from behind them. She could also see the bodies of Nara Shikamaru, a lazy student at the Academy. Beside him was Chouji Akamchi, dead as well. Ino Yamanka was running with a limp until man with a mask and "gun" came up to her, placing her in his arms while slinging the weapon onto his back. Hanabi was being carried by a man dressed the same. Kakashi Hatake was running beside one of the lime green men, firing off rounds from one of their weapons like it was nothing new, his Sharingan eye giving him a great advantage. Uchiha Itachi was doing the same, but he had two-cylinder device that fired two smoke trails of something that went boom.

Heat washed over her, and the lime green man took the brunt of the blast as though it was nothing but an itch. Looking down to make sure she was okay, he quickly picked her back up, the hot parts of his armor burning parts of her flesh before it finally cooled down. She ignored the pain, surviving being top priority, just as her father ordered her to do. Looking around, she found him, lying face down in the ground, a piece of metal stuck in his back. The man ignored her cries to save him. She beat at his arm, but he wouldn't budge.

The trees exploded into pieces of fire as other smaller ships came in, the back of them opening up to let the survivors in while the masked people ran back to provide cover fire. Hinata was thrown into the back of the ship, Hanabi being placed in her arms as she cried for the loss of her father. Neji was thrown in as well, crying as

well over his mothers' death. Ino was tossed in a few seconds later, along with Sasuke, a boy with messy black hair and thick eyebrows, a girl with shoulder length hair and Chinese outfit, a younger boy with a small scarf, and about a dozen more people. Once it was loaded up, the back of it closed, and she fell into the center of the ship as it began evasive maneuvers.

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Hinata awoke with a start as the beeping sound from her alarm clock woke her. She was covered in sweat. She groggily wiped most of it from her face as she sat up. She had that nightmare again. It was of the day that her world had been destroyed. She missed it. She missed her home. She missed her mother. She missed her father. And she missed Hanabi and Neji as well. Looking over at a small nightstand, she grabbed the only photo she now had of them. It was the photo of them in the SPI armor. Since working with Anders, she had been given close study over them in order to keep Dr. Halsey from knowing about them. Hinata had been fortunate enough to get to see them one last time before they had been deployed. She took one photo of them before they left.

Spartan Team Silver was their team name. Made up of Spartan-G289, -G010, -G198, and "G069. They were her reason for joining the military to be a scientist. She wanted to give them every advantage they could get. She wanted to see them though. All of them. Lee, Tenten, Neji, and Hanabi. She wanted to see them just one last time.

She looked over at the device again, and glared at it. _I'm going back to bed._ She grumbled. Late night shifts were the worst, especially on Vorrac.

(-)

Team Silver, after linking up with Fire Dragon and Jin, ran towards the Covenant cruiser that was hovering above a few buildings. It was just sitting there. It wasn't like it was waiting for something. Usually Covenant vessels only do that when they have found something. If they were damaged, they usually went down swinging, but this one wasn't firing any weapons, meaning it was either damaged, or it was repairing something seriously damaged that would help them move around. Or they had found something interesting, in which case, they would soon get it, and start glassing the place.

Their mission was to stop the ship at all costs.

The three squad leaders were out in front, running at full sprint through the alleyways of the mass of building, offices, homes, and destroyed buildings as they made a beeline for the ship. They could hear chatter of a few remaining Spartan II's that were in the area. They couldn't risk being seen by them. They were supposed to be top secret. If anyone saw them, they were to kill them on sight. No one was supposed to know about the Spartan III's. That was what ONI had told them before they had been deployed out into enemy territory to stop a Covenant attack on Scion. However, they arrived too late, and brought back the only object not melted down into glass: the body of Ralph.

The three teams came to a stop in a rundown building, Sasuke giving

the team the hold position motion while Spartan-G010, Tenten, slung her sniper rifle from her back to her shoulder to look down the scope towards the spot that Sasuke pointed out. Tenten had the third highest sharpshooting skills out of Gamma Company. She took note of the enemies in the area, and drew their names into the sand, along with how many of them there were.

Four Elites, twenty Grunts, and eight visible Jackals walked around a small stack of containers. They could hear the sound of the Buggers flying around, but they couldn't see them. Sasuke checked his battle rifle. It was still showing a full magazine. He looked over at his team, and gave short hand signs, ordering them to fan out into better spots for flanking and giving cover fire. They nodded, and ran out of the building, their SPI armors quickly allowing them to blend in with the scorched earth and worn down buildings. Spartan-G289, Neji, took up a downed Warthog, bringing his assault rifle to bear as he counted only four Buggers. Tenten was inside a small shack, her sniper rifle sighted in on a single Elite. Spartan-G198, Lee, was beside a crate, his whole body perfectly camouflaged to match the crate. Spartan-G069, Hanabi, pulled out her battle rifle as she got behind a large chunk of uprooted road, and took aim at the Grunts. Team Silver was in position.

Sasuke took up flanking positions at the back of them, keeping his eyes locked with the Jackals. Jackals had very good eyes. In fact, it would surprise him if it could see him right now. Once he was in position, taking up residence by an abandoned gas tanker, he motioned for his team to move out to take strategic positions. Spartan-G097, Konohamaru, was armed with a shotgun, and was between the dark alleyways, ready for them to come running through the only exit they'd be able to find. Spartan-G187, Haku, was armed with a pair of SMGs, and was taking up position at the exit of the alleyway.

Kiri and Yugito had shimmied up on top of the building, Kiri hefting a Machine Gun, and Yugito hefting a sniper rifle. Once Sasuke gave them green acknowledgment lights, they opened fire on the unsuspecting Covenant. In short order, they were taken out from above and below. Red lights went on, and they stopped firing. Two had made a break for it once the fire stopped. Out came Konohamaru and Haku, their guns blasting and peppering them. The two Elites went down, one missing part of its head, and the other peppered by the rounds of her SMGs.

They didn't want to stick around for a team to show up to check on them. So they quickly left the area, not wanting to get caught by the Covenant after taking out a squad. And they most certainly didn't want to get caught by any of the UNSC. They were supposed to remain top secret. It wouldn't do them much good to be stopped. As they began to leave, Kiri and Yugito opened fire from behind them, and told them keep going over TEAMCOM. They didn't stop or hesitate. They just ran as quickly as they could.

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Sergeant Tanner was thrown aside, his half a body being skewered by the remains of a wooden fence. Raukee shook his head in disgust. "These humans have no honor, no discipline. They are hardly a threat to us." He growled. Naruto walked past him, his energy blades flickering off. He had his eyes closed as he looked up at his friend. Raul looked down, his head slightly tilted before gunfire broke out

to their left. It lasted for only a few moments, and then stopped. All was quiet. "We should check it out." He ordered. They all activated their ACs, and began running towards the sound of where the gunfire had come from. When they got there, they found nothing but dead Sangheili, Unggoy, and Kig-yar.

Gunfire erupted from their right, and from the roof of a building. The team took cover, and looked up at the building from where they were hiding. Kiri and Yugito stood on top of the building, raining death down on them. Naruto growled as he shifted to one-tailed form, and got down on all fours. With quick speed, he ran out from behind the cover, his Over Shield kicking on as he slammed into the base of the building before heading straight out the back of it, and jumping onto the back of it, using the ladders to get to the top. Yugito came rushing towards him before he could get halfway up, and tackled him back down to the ground. Kiri remained on top until he emptied his weapon.

The two slammed down in the concrete hard. Naruto threw Yugito off of him, and got down on all fours again. She did the same, her tail tails now twitching angrily as she ran at him. Naruto lowered his body closer to the ground before rushing her as well. As soon as she was in fighting range, Naruto threw a fist at her. She caught it, and threw one of her own at him as she raised his caught hand above their heads. Naruto caught her fist, and kicked her in the gut before she could think of it. He cursed the fact that he hadn't activated his boot energy blades, or the match would be over. She was thrown back from the force of the blow. Naruto broke free of her hold, and smashed a fist into her faceplate. It cracked from the force of the blow, and sent her head first into a telephone poll. It buckled over from the force of the impact, and then fell down. Without a second thought, Naruto rushed her, and was tackled from the side by Kiri, slamming him through worn out pieces of the concrete walls until they were back where the strike team was.

Kiri raised a threatening fist when a plasma bolt sizzled past him, cracking his armor. A small trail of smoke hit the ground in front of the structure they took cover behind. Kiri looked over, and cursed. There, standing on top of the building, was Spartan-117.

His first instinct was to run. But they had been seen. So if he ran, John would certainly give chase. He was a top model, a prototype as Ackerson had put it, and they were the production model: Cheaper, more effective, and disposable. Spartan-117, however, was not disposable.

Naruto kicked Kiri in the balls, grabbed him by his massive head, and flung him to the side, allowing him to get back up. Once he did, a slug of metal slammed into his shoulder, bouncing harmlessly off his over shield. The force of the projectile had forcefully spun him around, but he quickly went back to the offensive, attacking Kiri, rather than John. Ahielee poked his head out, and took aim at the Demon with his carbine. It only took a few shots to make him take cover from the rounds. The Spartans' shields, though advanced, were nothing compared to the Covenant shields. Covenant shields, more importantly, over shields, could take almost anything without giving way. However, they were susceptible to being over charged or knocked out by EMP blasts and having a plasma grenade go off near them.

So when Naruto tackled Kiri to the ground, and began beating him

anew, he wasn't surprised when he felt battle rifle rounds itch at his head. Not wanting to die, he rolled over, taking Kiri along with him, and put his body in front of him. John shot him once before his mind could fathom what the strange Sangheili had just done. He stopped shooting, and Kiri kicked Naruto away. The force of the kick sent him crashing into the down Warthog, now effectively destroyed from the little kick.

"We must pull back for now." Raukee ordered. Naruto's eyes widened at this. Usually he was the voice of reason. But today was Raukee's turn to do it. He glared up at the Spartan as he came out of hiding, and took aim at him. Naruto rolled backwards, getting out of the smashed vehicle, and made a break for the others, his AC kicking on as he ran. John held his fire. He was more worried about the two people that had been fighting.

Kiri sighed as he watched the half a ton man slam down into the ground between him and Yugito. There was really no point to running now. He could just shoot them in the back if he wanted to, and outrun them to catch them. Looking over at Yugito, it was pretty clear her body was in bad shape. She was holding her side, and blood was coming out from the cracks in her SPI armor. She slowly walked towards them.

"Who are you guys?" John asked. There was no joking around in his voice. He could easily kill them, or just beat the answers out of them if he wanted to. Kiri helped Yugito walk towards the building while John watched them. A moment later, Johnson approached them, his battle rifle in hand, and a cigar in his mouth. Yugito was put easily onto the side of the room, her body lying against the cold concrete. John motioned for a few medics to check her out as a squad of ODSTs appeared.

Kiri stood up, his full height almost towering over the Spartan II. "We're Spartan III's, a production model." He told him simply. John, though if he was no one could tell, just stood there, like he wasn't shocked by it.

"No shit." Johnson mumbled as he looked over at Yugito. "Who's the girl?"

"Spartan-G207, Yugito. We're members of Gamma Company. We got deployed up on _Western Indolence _to help with the station defense. We lost one of our own during the attack. Now our mission is to capture the small guy I was fighting when you showed up."

"Not like you guys were doing a good job." Cortana stated. Kiri sighed. He had heard that some AIs got stay with their partners, like Cortana did with John, and even though he never got to have one, the AI that had helped train them, Endless Summer, had been a real bastard. He hated AIs from the moment he first laid eyes on the holographic, no speaking, ugly son of a bitch, which had been forced into teaching them battle planning, and other _fun _shit that they had to learn.

"Who is he anyways?" An ODST asked.

"We don't know his real name for certain, but we've stuck with calling him "Kyuubi" until we can actually get something from him." Kiri replied.

"You mean as in the mythological being that was talked about on Shinobi World?" Cortana asked. Kiri could have sworn he was grinding his teeth. Why couldn't they have just given it a number, rather than a very lame name like that? Sure everyone there was a shinobi, but did they have to name it that? He simply nodded, not daring to say anything that might end up getting him killed. "How odd that you would name him like that."

"Odd indeed, but he does have the Kyuubi's power. Have you ever heard of the word "Jinchuuriki", because if you have, you'll understand him." Cortana's voice faltered for a moment as she went through her arrays that were flowing through John's suit. John had remained unusually quiet the whole time. Something about this guy made John uneasy. He couldn't put his finger on it.

"I see." Cortana suddenly spoke. "So you must be one too? Going over all the last known files that we've obtained from Ackerson, you must be one as well, and holder of Hachibi." Kiri nodded, thankful that he wouldn't have to explain it to the AI. "So if you're here to capture him that must mean that he's with the Covenant. In a report given to us by Dr. Hinata, we learned that there only nine of these things, and that the ninth one belonged to a village on your world that was called "Konoha", but there had been no sighting of him during the rescue op. Another one was never found either, but from all the reports collected from the people of the world, it was never mentioned to have been in a "host" as some people called it."

"So if you came here to capture him, where's the rest of your team." John finally spoke.

"Our other member was killed by him. We think the Covenant brainwashed him to help them. They must have seen his power at one point, and taken him. As for the other teams that are down here, their goal is to take out that ship before it leaves." John looked up at the massive cruiser. "However, since Yugito is injured, and she's too valuable to Ackerson, we can't continue our mission. I don't think I'm strong enough to take him."

"Yeah, nine beats eight any day of the week." Johnson muttered as he put his cigar out. "Chief, I'll get a Pelican down here to pick them up. You take out that damn Prophet before the others get there. I think they're going to need your help." John just started walking outside, and then began running to make up for lost time. Johnson sighed. "Listen, I don't know what your real mission is, and I don't really care. If your Ackerson's pet project, you don't need to worry. We'll get you both through this. I'm certain you've been properly trained, but we can take them without you two." Kiri shook his head.

"No. Kyuubi has far more destructive power than anything you could imagine." Johnson kept his thoughts to himself on that area. He could imagine a lot of powerful things. "Once Yugito is taken to safety, I'll try my mission, either by dying, or capturing him. In any case, he's either going to die today, or I'm going to die. He can't be allowed to live with his power the way it is." Johnson looked the young Spartan over. Despite the size difference, Johnson still felt like he was looking down at him.

"Alright. I know that Spartan's are lured to suicide missions like a

moth to a flame. But I will not let you take him on alone. You understand me?" Kiri just looked at him for a good few seconds before nodding. No point in going to face him alone.

(-)

Naruto swore as he leaned up against the wall of the building. They were almost to the ship, but the closer they got, the more marines they seemed to run into. It seemed they had an idea on what to do. It was clear that running the rest of the way was going to take too long to do. They had yet to get a message from Regret, but it was certain that he was still in danger. Naruto could make out the small outlines of UNSC Pelicans as they flew around the ship, pelting it with a barrage of missiles before retreating.

"We need to get to Infinite Sacrifice before the infestation can get to hierarch." Ahielee said angrily. They were waiting for a patrol to pass them. Ahiel had always been impatient. He hated things like this. Raul knew of this, and decided to say nothing. He could chew him out later. Right now was not a good time to do so.

The other Sangheili that was with them, Seer, looked between the other two Sangheili and one Jinchuuriki. Out of all of them, he was the youngest, and the least experienced in fighting on their terms. Naruto had been forced into fighting different then most Sangheili. Most Sangheili in the SpecOps Corp, believed in fighting from long range while facing the Demons. However, Naruto was the expectation to this odd rule. Naruto had always been a closer range fighter. His skills with an energy sword were rather impressive at times. He had some skill with a plasma rifle, but nothing to truly talk about. Not like Seer though. Seer had the best of their squad. With a plasma rifle, he could mow down almost anything or anyone that got in his way. He was the sort of guy that worked best under extreme pressure. The more pressure you put on him, the better he got.

Raukee looked back at the troops that patrolled the area. There was nothing special about them. Looking back at his team, he activated his AC, and they nodded, doing the same. Thy meshed with the shadows and quickly moved around to flanking positions, and to get a better angle on the marines in front of them.

Plasma mortar rounds slammed into the ground around a crowd of marines, sending them flying in different directions very limbs still attached to their bodies. Two Wraiths appeared, both putting some distance between the other as gunners opened fire with a volley of plasma that burned the rest to the ground. The team of four didn't move from their positions, more out of fear of being shot by friendly fire. Naruto watched as the two Wraiths passed them, not once thinking to look behind them or around them. Naruto was certain it was an ambush.

Missiles streaked over his heads, slamming into the backside of the vehicles unprotected power core, causing a chained explosion with the rest of the first one. The other turned in time, taking the full force of the missiles with the stronger part of its body. The Wraith, and the gunner, opened fire on the marines that hefted RPGs, mowing them down with bolts of blue plasma. Naruto was sure that the Sangheili piloting them were novices, and had just learned a valuable lesson. A second set of missiles streaked overhead, this time the Wraith was unable to move in time, and was destroyed when one hit the

back of it, setting off the chained explosions again.

White liquid flames spilled onto the concrete, melting it into globs of smoldering smears of black and white. The heat alone from their distance was hot enough to burn their skins. Naruto stood up, his energy swords snapping to life, and rushed the two reloading marines. Sniper fire from his right caught him off guard, but Ahielee pulled out a beam rifle, took aim, and fire off two shots, one going through the left eye of a marine, the other going through the chest of partially concealed ODS. Both died instantly. Naruto continued his charge, and stabbed the first one in the chest, lifting him off the ground before throwing his body away. The other reloaded, took aim, and fired. Naruto jumped away. The earth beneath him detonated. Heat washed over him, he tumbled forward before coming up to his feet. Seer popped up, and blasted the marine with a few well placed rifle shots to the chest, melting him in half.

The area was clear.

Raukee shook his head at the twos actions. He would discipline them later for not working as a whole team. He looked back at the ship, his eyes showing worry. The energy shields had yet to recharge. A bad sign indeed.

Battle rifle fire smacked into the back of Seer. He spun around, his plasma rifle to bear. A lime green man in a suit appeared. Seer fired. The green man grabbed his wrist, and removed it, taking the plasma rifle as well. He was shot in the face, his overshields unable to handle the searing heat of his own weapon.

Naruto, Ahielee, and Raukee both glared at the man. "Demon!" They opened fire. Spartan-117 jumped back, using both weapons as one. He shot first with plasma to drain their shields, firing off rounds from his battle rifle next to kill them. The three managed to get to cover just as their shields went down. A Lekgolo pair came down from a Phantom, and roared in anger at the lone Spartan. Master Chief looked at them, then at his weapons. They could kill them, but against three Sangheili and a Lekgolo pair, they would not suffice.

John jumped back, taking cover behind a slab of smoldering concrete. He put the plasma rifle on his side, checked the ammo in the battle rifle. It was down to half a clip. The Lekgolo pair was his top concern. Taking care of them was top priority before he could complete his mission.

Machine Gun rounds pelted the armored aliens from behind, stunning it, and forcing it to turn to face the new threat, momentarily forgetting about the one behind them. John snapped up, his battle rifle at the ready. He took aim, and fired until the clip was spent on the closest one. It gave out a painful cry as the eels that made up the monstrosity fell out, some still crying, others dead from the attack. John took cover; reloaded, and looked back to see who it was that had gotten its attention. It was Kiri, armed with a Machine Gun. He continued to spit out round after round on the massive Hunter as it hunkered down behind its shield. John popped back up, firing into the back of the beast. It roared as it was caught between the two, and then fell over dead. John made a mental note to thank him later. The three Elites were his top concern now.

Ahielee pulled out his beam rifle again, took aim at the lone

Spartan, and fired. John took cover, not really listening to Cortana as she reminded him that two people now living in his head. Raukee stood up; his plasma rifle ready and waiting for the demon to stick his head back out. He too had momentarily forgotten about the other one, but Naruto hadn't. Turning to look see what the other demon was doing, he was partially surprised to see him wrestling with Naruto, eight unholy tails swaying about angrily as Naruto fought him with three tails doing the same. He couldn't get involved in a fight like that. It would surely be the death of him.

Ahielee and Raukee took aim at the Spartan, hoping to keep him pinned down. John stood up, took aim at them, and fired. A Pelican roared overhead, turned around, and machine gun fire began raining down on them. They took cover, but Naruto remained. Raukee watched as the ship and Spartan combined fire to attack Naruto. Naruto's shields were destroyed in a flash. His body was pierced by the rounds, and he fell over. Raukee jumped up, took aim at the ship, and fired. It was useless, but he had to do something.

Plasma rounds smacked into the side of the ship, throwing it off course. The black man in the back fell out of it, and landed on the ground beside the Spartan. The other demon grabbed Naruto by the head, but Naruto snapped to life, and grabbed him by his wrist, giving it a hard twist as he spun on his heels, taking out the man's legs with his boot blades. He went through with the motion as the young Spartan hit the ground at his knees where they had been cut off at, and watched as Naruto brought his leg around to take his head.

Rounds peppered the area around Naruto, forcing him back before he could kill him. Looking up, he found Spartan Team Fire Dragon, their guns blazing as they took aim on him. Naruto jumped back, electricity running down his suit as it began to recharge. John stood up again, took aim, and was forced to take cover as another Lekgolo pair emerged from a building, smacking a pair of Spartan III's out of their way. They were alive, but not looking good. They all fell back to where John was, instincts taking them over as they returned fire while running.

Naruto jumped back to his team, and took aim with his plasma rifle, and fired as he landed down behind the crushed Warthog for cover. Another Phantom roared overhead, took aim, and began firing down on them. Infinite Sacrifice began to move. They did it. The Prophet was leaving. Naruto looked up at the Phantom, and waited for the Gravlift to activate. It soon did, and a rainbow of blues and white hit them. The Lekgolo pair fired off their Fuel Rods, the green plasma smacking into the cover of the Spartans and lone marine. Smoke enveloped them, and the Lekgolo paired followed up after the three got in.

"Get us out of here." Raukee ordered. The Sangheili nodded, although a bit unhappy that they were leaving so soon, but complied nonetheless. Raul waited until they were high enough in the sky to not be shot before turning to face Naruto. Blood spewed from his chest and back, but most of it had slowed down considering the wounds he must have had. As his chest plate was removed, they noticed that his body was spitting out the bullets with his holy red light; a testament to his holy powers. Naruto breathed a bit deeper when the rounds were all out, and his body healed.

"Word of adviceâ€¦!" He hung his head between his legs as he began breathing a bit easier, the sudden shock to his system near over. "Never get hit by those weapons. They hurt like hell." He leaned back against the warm metal surface.

Raukee nodded, a bit of a smile forming with his four mandibles as he turned back to the pilot. "Get us back to our ship. We need to get-"

"Slipspace rupture on _Infinite Sacrifice's _bow!" The pilot stated, almost sounded alarmed by this. Though it was possible to do, no one had ever dared do it before. It was a dangerous act with such tall and strong buildings. When they would return to normal space after exiting Slipspace, they would get hit by the debris. Not exactly a well thought out move, especially if your shields were down. For all they would know, explosives could be inside anything on the city below them.

"Get us to _Holy Days _now!" Raukee shouted in anger. He was good at masking his fears in front of others. Right now, he was afraid. He wasn't afraid that they would live the blast that was generated by a Slipspace, which he knew they could do. Surviving on this world however, was the scary thing. They could possible do it, but they had fought the UNSC for years now, and although slow, they did learn from their mistakes, and how to better act against them.

The ship accelerated. Naruto held his side where a few of his wounds had yet to heal. Ahiel closed his eyes as the ship rocked back and forth before coming out of it.

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Another Pelican came down. John and Johnson both looked back at the other Spartans. They were staring up at the giant Scarab that loomed in the distance. John noticed it too, but he couldn't let the Prophet get away. "Destroy that Scarab." Cortana ordered. They snapped to attention, and nodded. "I don't know who you all are, but we owe you one for saving our asses. We need to capture the Prophet of Regret. Can we leave the Scarab to you?"

Johnson put his cigar in his mouth as one of them stepped forward. "We'll take care of the Scarab. You get the Prophet. We'll kick these bastards off the planet. You have my word." Sasuke told him. John just nodded as the bay doors snapped shut. Sasuke turned to face his team. "Alright, we got a Scarab to kill. Let's move out!"

(-)

Fire consumed the buildings. Everything the white flames touched was melted down. The earth was glassed. Stone was turned to golden hot liquids that boiled and bubbled before rapidly cooling. A massive walker stood before her. She remembered it. The four legged machine with a single head/mega cannon. Its body shaped like an insect of some kind. Bolts of white plasma crossed her path, melting the ground beneath her feet. She held her breath as the flames licked away at her skin.

She collapsed. She fell, face first. A massive hand picked her up, and she flew over the golden hot liquid into the arms of a man wearing all black. She looked up, his face unreadable due to the mask

he wore. She wasn't even sure it was a man to begin with. He put her in a ship, told her she'd be alright. He was shot in the back, and a massive creature with thick armor appeared. A green blur landed down on its head, unloaded its weapon into its exposed throat when it looked up at him. It fell over dead. He looked at her. She stared at him.

He turned away, his weapon at the ready. Hundreds of Gorilla-like creatures came at him, but team stood ready. The five stood tall.

(-)

Her alarm clock sounded, and she slapped it silly before it finally shut up. Sitting up in her bed, she looked over at the clock. A photo was behind it. A photo of the man she loved. She picked it up, and smiled at it. Short cut dark raven hair, cold onyx eyes, broad shoulders, and a suit of SPI armor. He was a Spartan III. She gave him his enhancements. Haruno Sakura had been the one to give him his treatments when he became a Spartan III. It had been six long years since she had last seen him before then, and now she heard rumors of ghosts working behind the scenes, killing Covenant, stopping their plans, and just flat out kicking their asses. She wanted him to be the one doing it. She would do anything for him, just as Kurt Ambrose had always wanted with his Spartan III's. They were his children; she was one of the doctors.

She put the photo back, the lights flickering on as she stepped onto the soft wood floor. Something's just never go out of style. She stopped in front of a laptop, the UNSC emblem spinning in the center of it. She moved the mouse, and it asked for a password. She typed it in, and the screen came alive with numbers and words. She clicked on the photos icon, and began peering through all of the photos until she reached a new image.

A creature with odd armor, lowered to all fours, a red transparent tail, two long transparent ears. She had seen it before. Kyuubi was back. She shut the laptop, sighing angrily as she walked towards her bathroom. "Dante, don't let anyone disturb me." A light began shining from her laptop, and polarized into a young man with a trench coat, boots, backwards baseball hat, and a smug grin on its face. It nodded, and watched her go.

(-)

They made it back to Holy Days only to find that it was damaged. Running was the only option. After being ordered to pull out, they quickly did so, and got shot in the back. Their Slipspace reactors damaged, but not destroyed. It would take time to repair them, but they could manage. They had managed a small Slipspace transition, but it was quickly shut down. They were working on the repairs at the moment. Naruto lay in the medical bay, something that no Sangheili ever wanted to do. Those that were brought in were held down by powerful restraints as they fought to get out. Being killed without honor was better than being cut by one without honor.

In the Sangheili's mind, those that could not be warriors were unworthy to even live. Those that did often became doctors or something else. Doctors were very rare, but they were usually very good. It was considered wrong to be cut by one that could not bring

honor to his life. Most Sangheili even kept their wounds, testaments to how determined they were to not have something healed. Some were missing eyes, others missing mandibles. Those that had no choice were sometimes viewed as warriors with honor because of the injury and how it was made. In Naruto's case, he was pretty certain that it would be considered dishonorable since he disobeyed orders, didn't work as a team, and got shot for it.

The doors parted, and Raukee walked in, his eyes dead set on Naruto's resting form. Naruto really didn't need to be here, but the Sangheili doctors insisted he be treated for the remaining wounds. Raukee closed his eyes. "You disobeyed my orders, got our team killed, and you even got injured. By all rights I would demand that scar your arms with the mark of disobedience, but your healing ability would negate this. So I must ask on your word, your honor, and your pride, that will never disobey my orders again." Naruto nodded, and Raukee sighed. "State what you did wrong."

Sangheili watching turned to face Naruto as he spoke. "I left the team to attack a False God. I got Seer killed, the Unggoy, and put our lives in danger to seek revenge for my injuries, my fallen people, and for the pain that sleeps in my heart. I disobeyed all orders given to me by you and as such, put all our lives in a greater risk. I will accept whatever punishment is given to me." Naruto reached over, grabbing a small energy scalpel. It hissed as the ionized gasses hit the air. Raukee watched with steely eyes as Naruto began burning marks in his arms; crossing line all up and down, where all could see and know of what he was now. Raukee had seen many do this. Death was usually preferred in this case, but Naruto was special. He would dare not have him kill himself.

"_Rauk, to the bridge._"

"I expect you to be done, and unhealed by the time I'm back." He ordered. Naruto nodded, and continued his task.

(-)

Raukee stepped onto the bridge of Holy Days, and looked around. Shipmaster, Thai Yrumyuee, stared blankly at a world on the screen. His scans were complete, and he was looking more so for a second opinion at the moment. Stepping up to him, making sure he was at least three paces behind him, Raukee waited to be addressed. He was a lesser rank than him in either case, and he thought it wrong to approach him, stand beside him, or even speak to him unless spoken to first. These were his beliefs only. Battle experience was what mattered to him. When he could kill hundreds of infestations by himself, lead two hundred successfully ops without losing a single life, then he would stand beside him.

Thai turned to face him, his hand scratching at one of his lower mandibles. "Raukee, I was hoping to get a second opinion." He stated calmly. Raul closed his eyes. Hundreds of thoughts went through his mind. Was he going to report what he made Naruto do to Xedraelee, his commander? What would he do to him? Though neither of Naruto or Xedrael voiced it, both viewed the other as family. A little bit of Naruto's world collided with Xedrael's own world. Their cultures messed together, a bond forming between the two in a way that would best be described as father and son. Neither voiced it, and probably never would for that matter.

"About what, Shipmaster," He made sure to keep his fears hidden.

He pointed to the odd dark world. It wasn't very big, but the life readings were unmistakable. Human life signs. He turned back to face the Sangheili. "I know we are to return to the High Charity, but should we take any more damage, it may be next to impossible to repair our ship. This world, should it have defenses like that of Earth's," his mandibles struggled to say the name of the planet, "will need to be prepared taken out."

Raukee looked at the world. At first glance, it appeared harmless. But things were never that easy for him. He closed his eyes, considering the information gathered already. They needed more data. Rushing in blindly would get them killed, something most Sangheili did when without a leader to guide them. He took in a deep breath, and opened his eyes. "My team shall go down to investigate the planet. We shall report back to you when we have something." He nodded to the Shipmaster, who returned it, and left.

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Naruto cursed his luck. The damn fox kept healing his wounds. There was no way to make him stop. Sighing in defeat, he placed the bloodied utensil down, and banged his head on the smooth metal railing of his bed. He growled in frustration, his holy powers taking the form of one tail. How he hated that he couldn't do it, he'd never know. Raukee walked in, looked at Naruto's healing arms, and smiled. He wasn't in trouble. Naruto's healing abilities kicked in, living proof that he was a God.

"We have a mission. Be prepared to leave."

A/N

Does anyone know how they tell time? I know they use cycles, but if someone can explain it to me, I'd be very happy. Is a cycle a second in their time, or is it like an hour, time of day, or minute? I really don't know because with the three books I've read, they made two references to it, and both were very different. One made it seem like an hour, while the other made it seem like seconds. If you know, could you please tell me? I don't wanna use hours, minutes, or seconds while working with the Covenant.

Before anyone jumps the gun on a few things, I wanted to clear something up. I know that John was the one to take down the Scarab, but because of Naruto, the Spartan III's, and the fact that Naruto just all around kicks ass, (My mind only), John left the Spartan III's to deal with the Scarab. I just wanted to let everyone know that I have it set up that way for a reason. Also, the Naruto Hinata is now in effect. It WILL take time to come to full swing, and by that, I mean them kissing. I'm not going to have her jump straight to him and screaming something like "Let's make kids" and then have it be like that. I did that once, and I kicked myselfâ€¦ hard. Not doing it again.

And for those that are interested, I used the songs, Blow me away and Diary of Jane by Breaking Benjamin, both of which I do not own, for the fights in this chapter. I went old school, and because they go good with the Halo series.

Anyways, thanks for all the reviews thus far people.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter 7

Sasuke watched the giant monster roar overhead as it spewed plasma down on infantry, tanks, Warthogs, and anything that got in its way. It was a pain in the ass, but they could take it out. They had to. This was what they had trained for. This was what they now lived for. Without Team Jin, it would be a bit harder, but they could manage. Team Silver could snipe while they rushed in, guns blazing, snapping necks, capturing energy weapons, and just mow them down.

No

"_Guerilla tactics work best when outnumbered." _Endless Summer's words echoed in his mind. The AI was right, and he knew that teamwork was the only way to win now. This had not always been the case however. Sasuke always had something to prove. He wanted to be the best of the best. He wanted to be remembered. He wanted to live. He wanted to see the end of the war, and the monsters dead for what they did to his homeworld. They would die by his hands.

Looking around, he spotted a tanker, warthog, destroyed truck | a fuel station. He grinned.

He motioned for his team to move towards the tanker, giving out hand signals for them to lay charges. Green acknowledgement lights winked on from his team. They ran to the tanker, hunched over, their SPI armor making them disappeared before they even got two feet away. He motioned towards Team Silver to head to the fuel station, and put down charges as well. Again, green acknowledgement lights winked on.

Sasuke looked over at the Elites that followed in Wraiths, Ghosts, and Specters. They had enough firepower to just flatten them if they saw them. However, they had two advantages at the moment. The first was that they were hard as hell to see. Covenant, mostly the Elites, hated using anything but their normal vision. The second was that they had a home field advantage. Being born on a less technology world had been a major problem for them, but no longer. Sasuke knew that if you blew up a tanker with a grenade, the explosion would be far more destructive thanks to the gas and petrol that was underneath the pumps.

Sasuke took a deep breath, remembering just how powerful the Wraith tanks were before slinking over towards the closest Ghost. They were moving slow enough for him to board it. The Elite didn't know he was near him until he boarded the front of the craft. The Ghost shook, and the Elite's jaws' snapped open as if it were surprised. Sasuke placed a hand on the top of it, jumped, and kicked the Elite out of the seat while he landed in the seat. He kicked it forward, and it gave a jerk before blazing forward, other Ghosts hot on his trail.

The Scarab looked down at him, momentarily weighing the options of

going after him. An RPG smacked into the face of the main weapon, effectively getting the pilots attention. Looking over to where the fumes of vapor came from, it found Neji, dropping down behind a tall building. The Scarab fired its main weapon, pushing forward as it did.

Haku held up a small little stick, pushed the red cover off of the blue button, and clicked it. Thunder and flames raced up the belly of the massive Scarab, and it wobbled forward, its core going critical from the unexpected attack. Wraith tanks scattered. Specters broke formation to get away from it, some paying more attention to the massive "legs" of the walker. The massive unit came over the fuel station, and Tenten did the same with the stick she held. Fire burned at the hardened metal plating of its belly. White flames spewed out of it as it toppled forward, and then came down with a loud crash. Alarms began to scream from it, but it was too late. The core exploded. Several Specters were destroyed. The Wraith tanks were consumed by the blast, and destroyed.

Sasuke did a U-turn, and opened fire on the charging fleet of vehicles. Some dodged the weapons, hitting others or smashing into broken down cars, trucks, and other tankers, resulting in smaller explosions. Those that held their ground were struck by the weapons, unfazed for sure, but injured as they returned fire. Sasuke stuck a plasma grenade to the console of the Ghost, jumped off, rolled with motion, and then jumped behind slab of concrete as it went off, destroying the fuel cells with it, making a giant purple explosion that took out the other Ghosts, and wounded several others that had been off of theirs when he did this.

Sasuke checked his ammo, and then stood up, shooting at the stunned Elites that wobbled around, the shields drained from the force of the blast. He killed four of the nine that remained before they gained their senses. They returned fire. Sasuke ducked behind his protective slab of concrete, released his spent clip, and inserted a fresh one before plasma rounds hit wildly in the area. The plasma striking his location stopped and he popped back out to see what it was. Two Specters sat in front of him, one of the gunners being Tenten while the pilot was Konohamaru. The other had no gunner, but was being piloted by Haku. Neji rode on the left side of one of them, Lee and Tenten doing the same on the one with no gunner.

Sasuke nodded his thanks, and jumped on the gunner spot. Haku pressed the controls in, and it rushed forward with a jerk. They still had to take down the other Scarab. Konohamaru fiddled with his, causing Tenten to groan as she watched her team get out of range. It suddenly jerked forward, and she grinned as they quickly caught up to the other team.

(-)

Naruto crashed down on his back into the sand, skidding a bit before he could get back up. When he did, he was kicked in the stomach, and then punched in the face, sending him back to the ground. He wiped the blood away from his mouth, leaving a trail of it on his arm and on the side of face. He stared down the person who hit him. A scrappy young Sangheili named Vore, stood just a few inches taller than him and with angry eyes on him. Around him, stood the other Sangheili; all of them learning from instructors, and uncles on how to fight. Most watched it as an act of learning how to fight. It was no

ordinary fight.

Vore had never liked him, or his powers. He thought of his powers as an illusion, and testified that they were not holy. Naruto didn't care. At the age of eight, he had learned that not everyone shared the same views as other Sangheili. He had been attacked thirty-nine times since he joined the Covenant, and most had been done by the youngest of the Sangheili in the military. Some of them were put on trial; others were killed on sight by Xedrael, his caretaker.

Vore kicked him again, but Naruto caught his hoof, twisted in the sand, sending the young Sangheili to the ground. A few of the much younger Sangheili laughed, others just watched with cold eyes. Naruto let go of his ankle, rolled to his feet, and spun on his heel, his leg sliding out, landing a solid blow to Vore's face. The blow spun him around, but he quickly corrected his stance, brought his hands together, and smashed them down on his head. Naruto leaned forward before the blow could strike him, and hit him dead center in the face. He reeled back again, but grabbed Naruto by the neck, and flung him over him as he hit the ground.

Naruto rolled to his feet first, raised his fist, and a firm grip grabbed hold of his whole arm. Vore stood up, spun around, and lowered his threatening fist. Naruto looked up, and spied Xedraelee holding his arm. He looked worried about the fight, but was visibly happy to see Naruto with such determination to fight. Vore snorted at them, and walked off, not once showing respect for a Sangheili of higher rank than his own.

Xedraelee watched him go, his eyes saddened at the sight. He had lost everything in taking Naruto in and raising him. He lost his place in the Keep. He lost his former home. He lost the interest of most Sangheili saw for those that had seen Naruto's holy powers. He lost everything, and yet, gained everything from what he lost. He couldn't be happier seeing Naruto, someone, who by an odd stroke of fate had become something of a son to him. He'd never admit this. Sangheili were never supposed to know the name of their father. It was against their way. They could only know the name of their mother and her brother. For Naruto to even be trained by his caretaker who viewed him as such was considered wrong.

The others began training again, and Xedraelee lead Naruto away as his wounds began to heal before his eyes. Once they were clear of the eyes of the others, he knelt down to his level.

"You should not have started that fight." He told him simply.

"But he started it." Naruto whispered angrily as he turned to glare at where he thought he was standing. Xedraelee sighed. This was something that Naruto did on a regular basis. Being a caretaker was hard, very hard for a Sangheili that only knew of fighting.

He shook his head. "That does not matter. What matters is that he egged you on. You DID start the fight. And you were losing." Naruto looked down upon hearing that. He brought shame to Xedraelee and himself. He would have to regain the honor he had in order to make it better. Looking up at him, he was quickly reminded of why he did this. He did it for him. Xedraelee, the Sangheili that saved him, was his reason for living. He lived so he could be happy, so he could bring him honor, and so he could help him regain what he lost as

well. Xedraelee let a small depressed sigh as he walked away, Naruto following him slowly.

Naruto suddenly stopped, looked over at where Vore was laughing, and narrowed his eyes on him. If he could beat him, he might get their lost honor back. Most of the Sangheili that lived here had either not heard, or simply didn't believe in his holy powers. Maybe he could change that here. All he needed was to get angry. It wasn't very easy for him to JUST get angry. He needed a motivation, a reason, to be angry. Losing honor would not suffice for this need.

Xedraelee stopped walking once he noticed that Naruto was no longer following. Looking over at where he stood, he followed his gaze to the Sangheili that stood around Vore, most laughing, others shaking their heads while a few pointed at the two of them. Xedraelee felt hurt at this. He had been cast aside because he believed Naruto a God. He wasn't wrong. They were wrong.

He closed his eyes, took in a deep breath, and then turned to where Naruto used to be standing. His eyes opened, and found empty sand. He quickly cut his eyes towards the Sangheili. He felt his insides twist as a few of them, Vore included, began kicking and beating him again. He quickly walked over to him, but suddenly stopped. If he stopped them, they would only worsen the beatings later. Naruto had to learn his place among them. He had to, or he would never be able to survive in their world.

As the beatings began to worsen, Xedraelee felt a hand grab his shoulder. Looking over, he found Thel standing there with hateful eyes on the boy.

"I heard that he has a holy power." He said bluntly. Xedraelee looked back to the fighting. Thel was once a friend to him. But after bringing Naruto into the Covenant, he hardly ever wanted to talk to him. In fact, he always tried to ignore him now. It was sad really, to know that he had lost so many of his friends because of his actions. But he hoped for the best, more so for Naruto than himself. Thel cut his eyes towards his form, and looked him over. "You were once a proud Sangheili, who knew only the word of victory. Now look at you." He motioned him with half of a wave. "Look at what you have become because of your actions."

Xedraelee looked away, shame in his eyes. Thel was right. He was once like that. He never questioned anything or anyone. He simply moved from target to target, killing anything that he could when he could, how he could, and where he could. This was not him anymore. He questioned things and the advice from others. He went to the female Sangheili for guidance on raising Naruto. It was not their way. He was supposed to be a Sangheili that killed without thinking, not a surrogate parent.

"You are right." He said softly. "I have become weak due to my actions. I have lost the will to fight, and would sooner kill myself than kill him." Thel stood up to his full height, wondering if this was a challenge. "But I saw his power. I saw him, three years ago, kill Honor Guards and Jiralhanae. There is no mistaking what we saw him do."

"I am not questioning what you saw. I am merely making an obser-" Thunder echoed from the fight, and a red light forced everyone to

cover their eyes. Those that stared into the light looked on in horror as a bloodied Naruto sat up, blood spilling from between his teeth. His holy powers twisted and turned as it fought to grab something, anything. It clung to the ground, and pulled him down to all fours. The Sangheili that had once been beating on him now stood before him, frozen in fear at his long fangs, thickened whisker, long claws, and blood red eyes. A single tail formed, and moved around in a playful manner.

Naruto stood upright, cracking his neck, a habit that had come on just recently. He gave them a fanged smile. "What's the matter? Are you afraid of me now?" He mocked. Vore looked back at his helpers, wondering if any would stand beside him to help him put him down. None dared to even breathe. He growled at them, and lunged at Naruto. Naruto watched him lung at him, a grin appearing on his face before forming a giant red hand from his powers, snatching the Sangheili out of the air, and smashing him into the sand. He gave out a painful cry as Naruto slowly began to crush him. "You knowâ€¦ I know what it's like to be crushed by someone a lot stronger than myself without my powers active." He told him, sympathy coming from his scratchy and rough voice. Vore stopped screaming long enough to take a breath of air, but was released at the last second.

Vore slowly stood up, unsure as if he should fight or surrender. Naruto stared at him, a good foot shorter than him. Vore stared down at him. Naruto let go of his power, and looked down. "Why did you not kill me?" Vore asked.

Naruto chuckled. "You're like me." Vore gawked at him. Vore was no God. Naruto knew what he was going to say, and cut him off before he could say anything. "I mean that you're alone." Xedraelee turned his head a bit to look at Thel Vadamee with uncertain eyes. He had to be thinking the same thing now. Naruto looked down at his own hands. "I can understand what loneliness is. I felt it before, and it hurt a lot worse than any kind of pain one can go through in a physical term. Even though my body allows me quick regeneration, I can see my scars. I can remember the pain of being burned alive by my people. I can remember being stabbed repeatedly in an attempt to kill me. I can even remember the sour taste of poison that was in my drink and food. I can remember all of these things, but none ever hurt as worse as loneliness."

Vore finally spoke. "What makes you think I am alone?" He hissed.

Naruto smiled. "You talk big, but when you face someone bigger, you cower. I did that too once, it wasn't fun. I also know why you do it, because I did it for the same reason." Vore's mandibles twisted a bit, unsure if he should press forward. In his heart, he knew this to be true. His family had been disgraced by one of their own who turned hieratic because of their beliefs. It pained him so much because of it. Naruto gave him a sad smile. "You do itâ€¦ because you want attention. You want people to see you as you, not someone else. I know of your families past actions, Vore, and I honestly can say that I don't judge you by their actions. I will judge you only by your own. You are alone, just like I am."

Vore snorted at him. His eyes glazed over. "I don't need your pity, human." He shoved Naruto away, but his powers activated again. His hands were burned when he touched him this time, but he also froze

when he felt a sharp pain in his temple where Naruto touched him. For a while, no one knew what was happening before Vore came out of it when Naruto pulled his hand back, pocketing something in the sleeves of his kimono. He rubbed his arms, looked around, and then looked back at Naruto. He opened his mouth to speak, but nothing came out. Naruto simply shook his head, his powers vanishing again. The young Jinchuuriki walked away, his hands stuffed in his hakama and kimono training uniform that he had picked up at the remains of Konoha. _His painâ€¦ is far greater than lost honor. _

"Let's go home, Xedraelee. I think I've done enough damage today." The two left after a small nod to Thel, signaling their goodbye. Once they were away, Xedraelee looked down at his charge, wondering what it was that made him do what he did. He opened his mouth to speak, but Naruto beat him to it. "I showed him the pain I've experienced from within the walls of my former home. I wished for him to know that he isn't alone, no matter what we have been through. He seeks to regain honor, while I seek revenge for what happened to my people. This is why I chose to do what I did in the end." After that, they remained quiet until they got home.

(-)

Xedraelee snapped awake, sitting up in his bed as he did. He slowly put a hand on his bed frame, and closed his eyes. He shook his head to clear the dream he'd had from his mind. He remembered that day very well. It was a day the signaled the beginning of vast friendships. It was the day that most of the Sangheili that never believed in his power, more precisely, the Vadam Keep, that he was in fact a God. After that day, Xedraelee had gotten more support from former friends, and better protection for Naruto as he grew. Even Thel began training the boy, hoping to be graced again by his powers.

He walked through a few of the rooms in their home on High Charity, sighing most of the way until he reached Naruto's room or former room now. Naruto had moved away a few years ago after his military carrier began to grow. When he left his home, got his own, and began leaving on far more dangerous missions, Xedraelee began to do the same, always hoping to work by Naruto. He had only worked with him once, and that had been during the mission Vore had died at the hands of a Demon.

Opening the door to Naruto's room, he stared at all the items he had brought back to show him the things he done. His room was set up likeâ€¦ wellâ€¦ like a human teenagers' room. A large bed was in one corner, a television with two black boxes, one with a VHS tape resting on the top of it, and other with a CD sitting on top of the other. Naruto had collected a wide range of "movies" from all of the worlds they had been to. On his dresser sat the helmets, vests, clothing, books, and magazines from all the planets he had been to, or the people he had killed after they killed a friend. Vore's death had been avenged some time ago.

He snorted at the helmets of ODSTs, Demons, and Marines. He wanted to destroy the helmets, but they were prizes to Naruto, showing his accomplishments to the Sangheili.

Xedraelee looked around the room one more time before his eyes locked with his laptop that he had stolen from one of the worlds, and

noticed the image of Vore and Naruto both dressed in their SpecOps Armor colors. _Narutoâ€|_

(-)

The first thing Naruto saw was green. All around him was green. Tall trees and tall grass that went as far as they eye could seeâ€| so long as you could see above the grass. For Naruto, he couldn't see over it. For Ahiel and Raul, along with Sore and Varo, two more Sangheili, it was very easy for them to see over it. Sore and Varo, both Sangheili that were very powerful, and both loved using duel plasma rifles. Both had been with a Scarab that had gone down early in the invasion. Both were shamed by it.

Naruto could hear Ahielee snicker at him as he pushed more of the grass out of his way, and found a large dark black tree standing in front of him. He stared at it with hateful eyes before walking around the fat base. It had to be about thirty feet in diameter. When he finally got around it, and found another tree sitting in front of him. He glared at it, and walked around it. When he got around it, he found another tree sitting in front of him.

The snickering got worse. Naruto looked down at the ground, tapping his foot as he listened to the silent chuckling of Ahielee. _I fucking hate trees. _Naruto looked around, and then found Sore standing above the tall grass. He walked up to him, and glared at him when he knew he was looking down at him. He wished he could just punch him. He would if they were on the ship, and he'd have everyone believe him when he'd tell them it was a simple spar. "I'm kicking your ass when we get back to the ship." Naruto began walking away, leaving a chuckling Sangheili behind.

(-)

Hinata walked around her lab, drinking a cup of coffee as she slinked over to her computer. Anders was already sitting at her station, a pot of coffee sitting on a warmer as she typed on the laptop. Screens of Forerunner tech spun around on her screen before numbers, letters, glyphs, and known planets that held Forerunner tech appeared. She moved through each file quicker than what most might think she would be able to with her gnarled fingers.

Hinata took her spot beside her, and took another sip of her coffee from while booting her computer, laptop, and other screens, online. A few seconds later, they demanded her password. She quickly typed it in. The screen booted up, and a page from her diary appeared as a wallpaper, rather than her usual turtle swimming in an ocean with fish. She looked around the computer towards an amused looking Anders as she innocently took a sip of her coffee.

"How long did it take you this time?" Hinata asked with irritation in her voice as she changed it back to the turtle.

Anders sat her coffee down, and placed a finger on her chin as if she was thinking. "Two seconds." She answered before going back to her work. Hinata growled as she changed her password again. "Spartan-G010," Hinata swore. "You're so predictable."

"One of these days I'll think of a password you can't crack." She growled. Anders just laughed, and soon Hinata was laughing as well.

They both went back to work. As they typed in silence, Hinata began thinking about Hanabi, wondering if she was okay. She wanted to see her, and give her an edge over the Covenant now more than ever. She wanted to see Neji as well, but there was something odd about seeing him. The last time she had seen him, it wasn't pretty. He belittled her for not wanting revenge for the death of their people. Hinata was too shy about fighting. She actually hated it. But she wanted to help them in their fight by making or finding new technology to help turn the tide of war.

Anders snapped her fingers, getting her attention. "Hey! I think I found something." Hinata stood up, and walked to her side. Schematics, numbers, layout designs, and other structures on the planet appeared. Hinata stared at them. She didn't really understand what she was looking at. She looked at the numbers below the power readout. They were fluctuating for some reason. She turned her head as they continued to go crazy. They were dropping, then rising, then going well below the red line, then well above the red line.

Anders scrolled through a few more numbers, all of them doing the same. She stopped on an image. It was a small crystal that was pulsing red. Anders began typing furiously in an attempt to find it. More of the odd crystals came into life, and she typed faster. Hinata ran to her computer, an attempt to help her. Working together, they zeroed in on the problem and its location. A holographic map of the world came into life. Hinata stood up, and stared at it.

The planet looked normal. She pushed the magnifier out, zooming out of the planet. Her eyes, along with Anders, widened at the sight of the Covenant Destroyer that was in high orbit. They both looked at each other before zooming back in on the planet. They zoomed in on the complex where they were. Ten guards with sniper rifles sat on the roof, one peeing off the ledge, and the others looking through their scopes at something. Nearly fifty well armed men stood outside the complex, armed with a wide array of weapons, and most of them taking up flanking positions should an enemy ever come down to the planet.

Anders looked at the map, and then zoomed in even more. The numbers were getting crazier. She could see lines in the core of the planet. Staring at it, she began to stand up just as alarms began sounding. She zoomed out of the map, looking at what caused it, other than the sighting of a Covenant Destroyer. The snipers were now dead. She rushed back in on the map, took a look at it, and began rechecking her computer and laptops numbers on where the source was.

"Anders, we need to get out of here!" Hinata put her laptop in a bag, grabbed a handful of data chips, crystals, and other things before she helped the older woman do the same. Anders was typing again on her computer as explosions began to sound in the distance, just outside the room they were in. Hinata ran over to her side, trying to usher her out of the place. "Come on! We need to go!"

"Just one second." She whispered. She typed in a line of code, and pressed enter as the doors exploded into splinters and melted metal that liquefied the floor. Four Sangheili and one Jinchuuriki entered. They brought their weapons to bear, took aim, and the Jinchuuriki crumpled to the ground, clutching its stomach. The Sangheili turned to Naruto, forgetting about the two women. "This way," Anders whispered. They ran away as the Sangheili looked over their

friend.

"Where are we going?" Hinata asked as they rounded a corner.

"There's a small cave at the end of this hallway. When we get there, we can use it to go deep underground, and use the tunnels to get to safety. I just hope the message I sent to Fleet Command gets through." Anders looked over at Hinata, and then looked behind to make sure the Covenant weren't following them. "I wonder why the small one dropped the way he did." She looked over at Hinata again. "Any ideas?" Hinata shook her head. "Okay."

(-)

Naruto slowly got to his feet, the pain slowly subsiding for some reason. As he got to his feet, he could still feel the pain hitting his stomach. He shook his head, unsure of what to make of the strange pain. Raukee placed a hand on his shoulder, getting his attention. It wasn't the kind of attention that he just expected.

Naruto whipped around, and punched him in the jaw, sending him flying onto his back. Naruto growled at him, his holy light forming around him before flickering off as he dropped to one knee, holding his head while breathing hard. Raukee got to his feet, glaring at him until he noticed the holy powers' were acting up. Naruto started mumbling something in another language. Even to Raul=kee, it sounded like he was arguing with someone, or something. When Naruto finally got control of his powers, he was shaken by something.

"Uzumakiee, what is wrong." Sora asked with concern in his voice. Naruto shook his head, uncertain of what was going on as well. He quickly got back to his feet, shaking his head as he did, and began blinking as his eyes began to burn. Sora grabbed hold of his shoulder, helping him stand when he began to wobble. "Raukee, I believe it would be wise-"

"No." Naruto growled; his voice scratchy and rough. "I will kill that female." He summoned his energy blades. His holy power covered him, and three-tails formed. Sora and Varo both stared at his holy powers with their mandibles opened wide. They had never been graced by its power. It was a sight to behold, even if it was a very destructive power. Naruto gave out a loud and powerful roar before charging the area they had left through. The four Sangheili quickly gave chase.

(-)

Team Fire Dragon and Silver watched as the second Scarab began spewing out white flames as it collapsed to its belly, and blew up into chunks of molten metal and flames. As they watched it fall to the ground, a few shook their heads. Sasuke turned to Haku, and motioned for him to set up a Com Link with Command. As he did so, a Pelican roared down overhead, and dropped before them. The hatch opened up, and a marine came out.

He gave them a salute, and they did the same before he spoke. "Are you the Spartan III's Team Fire Dragon, Silver, and Jin?" Sasuke and Neji nodded, but quickly explained the Jin was out of commission until they were patched up. "We have a new mission for you guys."

Ackerson will give you a briefing from the frigate, _Silver Night,_ while you head to your next destination." They loaded up without question, Tenten being the last one on as she tossed a few charges on the two damaged Specters. She pressed a detonation button on a small stick. Thunder echoed from outside the Pelican.

(-)

Hinata and Anders walked through the oddly lit crystal tunnel that was under the building. They had backtracked several times, got turned around four times until they started carving small symbols into the glowing crystals. For the moment, they were hoping to rest while the chasing Covenant got lost behind them. Anders stopped, doubled over, and took in deep breathes as she clutched the stitch in her chest. Hinata turned to face, worry written in her eyes as she looked her over. Anders sat up against the wall of the tunnel, next to some crystals, and pulled out her laptop. In the confusion, she had forgotten to shut it off. She didn't have power left for it.

She clicked a few buttons, turned on a map, and looked over the tunnel layout. From what she could see, the tunnel network was fast, and only a few lead straight to the center of the planet. The tunnel network was never really explored. They had sent people down into the network once before, but they never returned. No one had known just how far the network went until a few months ago. It took several Sonic Sound Pulses to find how far they went. After the last research team went in, no one wanted to come down here.

The two studied the map as they backtracked a bit on it. Scanning over the map, she noticed that a few passages lead up to the surface. It would be impossible to get to the top at the moment however. She was certain that the Covenant chasing them had sent for help on checking the tunnels out. Chi Rho, a planet that was glassed after Vice Admiral Jean Mawikizi lost the battle deep inside the planet. His efforts had stopped most of the Covenant from moving forward for a few years. She was certain they would know to check every tunnel, every rock, and every tree top to find them.

She closed her laptop, stuffed back into her brown leather bag, and stood up. "We need to keep moving. They're probably right behind us right now." She doubled over. A beam weapon blasted the crystals where her head once was. Hinata jumped up, and felt something grab her throat. She was lifted up, and Anders watched as a small creature in armor pulled her close to his visor. His body was shaking as he fought to bring his plasma sword to her chest. Hinata clawed at his armor, but he wouldn't budge. His body froze, and he gave out a loud roar of pain as he dropped her. His body crumbled to the ground, and his power began to make the crystals change blood red.

The Sangheili took aim. One fired, but missed. The particle beam had been warped, and missed Anders by inches. He didn't dare fire again, and he watched as the small figure fought a battle with its self. He mumbled something in an odd language again as the two women began running again. He wanted to chase them down, but the small one was more of a worry for him. As they watched them go, the small swung his energy sword into the wall, and roared again as the crystals near him began to change from their transparent white to a blood red.

(-)

Hinata and Anders came to a stop once they had been certain they weren't being chased anymore. Both put their heads between their legs as they tried to regain their breaths. Hinata was the first to recover, and she quickly brought a hand to her throat where he had held her. She was certain she could still feel his eyes on her. His power, there was no mistaking it now. He was the Kyuubi; the only question was if it was the same boy that had vanished from her village before it was destroyed by the Brutes, or if it was a clone.

"I think we might have lost them." Anders told her. Hinata didn't say anything. "He can't hurt you from close range. I wonder why?"

"No clue." Hinata gasped for air once she began walking again. Her legs were killing her. Years of just sitting around in front of a computer were finally taking their toll on her. She hated that she had never decided to do anything more than sit in front of a computer, look at research data, and just be a "lazy bones" as a few ODSs had once told her. "Let's keep moving. Kyuubi creeps me out."

(-)

Naruto cried in pain as he swung his weapon blindly. His helmet was gone. He was talking to himself. Blood was trickling down his head as he fought to get away from the tunnels. He was mumbling things to himself, swinging his weapons at anything that moved, and just destroying anything bumped into. It was a scary to the Sangheili team. As they hit the surface, Naruto stopped screaming in pain, and just dropped to his knees, his wounds healing before their eyes, and his red eyes turning blue.

"Find," Naruto began coughing as his lungs protested against him talking. His voice was hoarse because of his cries of pain, but he tried to speak again anyways. "Find that woman. Bring her to me. I must know what she's done to me." He started coughing again. Naruto's holy power hit him again, and he stood up. "I can't stay here. This place hurt us." Naruto collapsed to the ground, his powers leaving him, and his body becoming still save for his breathing.

The Sangheili looked between each other. "Us?" Sora questioned.

"Call for a Phantom. I will get the female he desires. I too wish to know how she harms him." Rauke explained. He became invisible as his AC came on. The three Sangheili looked at each other before calling for a Phantom. Whatever was hurting him was also causing him to become delirious, and dangerous, even psychotic. They wanted to help him, but even with him being prone on the ground they were uncertain on what to do.

(-)

There had been no good greetings between friends as the Spartan III's got onboard Silent Night. They had been briefed, loaded into SOEIVs (Single Occupant Exoatmospheric Insertion Vehicle Pods), and then launched to the surface on the dark side of the planet. They didn't dare risk a fight with a Covenant ship, even if it was damaged. There was no real gain in it. They were to stay in the dark. Silent Night

_was a stealth frigate, and a very nimble one. They're only real defense was stealth alone.

So as Sasuke counted heads, he was relieved when he counted all eight of the eight that had launched. Yugito had been healed, and brought into his team for the time being. It made sense actually. They still needed a replacement for Kiba after he had been killed by a mass of Grunts. Not a very heroic death, but it was one for the records. It drove home the simple fact that when they had high numbers, they were a threat. If they had a leader, they were a threat. Few in numbers however, and without a leader, they were worthless and hardly with a bullet to the head.

Sasuke looked around, and noticed that they had landed near the facility. Even without being able to see it, he could somehow sense that there was nothing in it. But his mission was to recover any data that might be inside, rescue Hinata and Anders, and then kill anything that wasn't human. Good orders. Sasuke liked it when the orders were plain and a simple.

He motioned for Silver to check out the facility, get any data they could get off of the computers, and then blow the place. They were going to make sure that the Covenant didn't get anything from the facility or anything else for that matter.

After that, he led his team into the vast jungle of trees, tall grass, and possibly dangerous animals.

(-)

Anders and Hinata came to the surface, and smiled as they found eight flaming objects coming down from the atmosphere. They hoped that it was their forces anyways. They stopped next to a large cedar wood-looking tree that was about as big as a Scorpion M808B Battle Tank, maybe even a bit bigger. They found a small hollowed out section of the tree, and took shelter inside it. Hinata once again put her hand to her throat, uncertain if his grip as still around her or not. She was slightly afraid of him now for some reason.

Anders pulled out a small ration bar. She tossed it over to Hinata, and then pulled out another for herself. She pulled the wrapper off, took a bite, and then swallowed it before pulling out her laptop. She began typing on the device for a little bit before looking up at Hinata. Hinata had always been timid, shy, and even hard to find a man. She had once mistaken her for a lesbian, but Hinata had proven that she wasn't a lesbian by going out on a few dates with other researchers.

But looking at her right now, after years of working with her, teaching her, and even being upstaged by her a few times, she had forgotten that she was timid, shy, and fearful when put into dangerous situations that involved gunfire. She couldn't say she didn't know how that fear felt. She remembered being grabbed by some massive Elite, and taken away. She had been frightened beyond belief, and then even threw herself to be taken away when Forge had been on the ground, and about to die. Thinking back on that moment in her life, she quickly scrambled over to her side, and pulled out a small pistol. It wouldn't do much do one of those massive monsters, but it would help them against any of the others maybe.

She looked over at Hinata as she quietly ate the offered ration bar.

It was nerve wracking to be so quiet. The two usually talked nonstop. But right now, if they talked, they could give away their position, which wouldn't be good.

Hinata quietly put the wrapper in her coat pocket, and then sighed explosively as she pulled her legs close to her chest, pulling herself into a small ball. Anders sighed. She could sympathize with her. She was obviously being targeted, by as to why, she could only guess that it had something to do with the small one crumpling in pain. That was the only thing that made sense to her really.

The grass parted, and Anders pointed her gun at the shadow in the tall grass. She wasn't certain on what she was aiming at, but she was still alive, meaning that it wasn't Covenantâ€¦ hopefully. A hand grabbed Hinata by her throat. Hinata was lifted up by the hand. Anders pointed her weapon at it. The figure in the grass opened fire into the back of the creature in front of it, and Anders opened fire as well. A massive Elite appeared, and spun around to kick the Spartan III away while slinging Hinata around to hit the older woman, knocking her down to the ground.

The Elite put Hinata in front of its self, and Hinata clawed away at the massive hands that held her throat. A shimmer of foliage was ruffled, and another Spartan III appeared, this one pointing a shotgun at her. It was clear that they were determined to get her away from the Elite.

The hum anti-gravity technology sounded from above. A blue beam of light hit them, and Hinata felt herself being pulled up as the blue beam began pulling them up. The two Spartan IIIs' watched it take her away, uncertain on what to do. Hinata was a friend, but a security risk. If they opened fire now they could still kill her before the Phantom took her away. They opened fire, but plasma bolts flew down on them from another Phantom that appeared. They took cover, and watched as Hinata was taken away.

An explosion sounded from the distance. The research facility had been destroyed.

One of the Spartan's shook its head, and then sighed. "_Silent Night_", this is Sasuke. Hinata has been captured. We need to-" Loud cries of panic, fear, and pain echoed back before a second sun appeared in the skies. _Silent Night_ had been destroyed. Blue beams of light began falling from the sky. The planet was being glassed now. "Shit!" Sasuke cried.

Anders got up to her feet, and yelled for them to follow her. Team Silver appeared just in time, and followed her down into the cave network. It was there only way of surviving for the time being.

(-)

Naruto screamed in pain as Hinata was brought before him. Hinata was stripped over her clothing, thrown to the ground, and then picked up to reveal her naked body, say for the red crystal necklace she was wearing. Raukee grabbed it and took it away as Thai Yrummyee walked

in, staring at the naked female for only a quick glance. He felt disgusted just by casting that quick glance as he approached Naruto. Naruto's pain had subsided, and his wounds healed instantly. Hinata could only watch as machines began helping him heal his wounds.

Ahielee drew a plasma pistol, and aimed it at Hinata before Thai grabbed hold of his arm. He spoke something that Hinata couldn't understand, but it was clear that Ahielee didn't seem happy about it. Happy or not, he was compelled to follow the orders when Naruto's holy powers came to life again, and tossed the machines back as he stood up. His armor from the hips down was still on him, but his chest was bare.

He gave Hinata an angry glare as he dropped down from the bed, and straight in front of her. He picked her up by her throat, bringing her to her feet before giving her hard a jerk, bringing her up to his face. She was staring straight into red eyes that had nothing but hate in them. He tossed her away, and said something in their language before walking over to the rest of his armor. Hinata was carried away, but not before Naruto threw the rags that were her clothes, back at her. Once she was out of the room, Naruto shook his head.

"That crystalâ€¦ I do not understand why it hurt me." He nodded to the other Sangheili to leave, leaving him, Raukee, and Ahielee with him. As they left, Naruto made sure that no other Sangheili or anything else remained in the room. "Kyuubi was hurt too by it." The two Sangheili looked shocked by this. They, along with a few other Sangheili, knew that he possessed the monstrous being known as Kyuubi. They knew the life story of it. How it was sealed. They even knew that his powers weren't fully holy. But still, it was God like to them.

"How can that be?" Ahielee asked seriously.

"I don't know. But it caused our minds to temporarily merge." He grabbed the side of his head, and began breathing hard again. "The seal may have been damaged. If it breaksâ€¦" he looked down at their weapons, and then up at them.

"It shall hold. Your will is strong. It shall hold so long as your will allows it." Raukee told him seriously. Naruto nodded and let go of the side of his face. The pain had subsided. He shook his head, and stormed out of the room. Ahiel and Raul followed him after looking at each other.

(-)

Naruto walked onto the bridge of the ship. He was angry that he was allowing the female to stay on the ship. Thai turned to face him as they went into Slipspace. Naruto didn't exactly care that they were leaving now. All he cared about was why she was being allowed to stay on the ship.

"Why is the female staying on the ship?" Naruto hissed. Thai took a deep breath. Naruto was something close to God to all Sangheili that had seen his power. Striking him was like striking a God, something you don't do. But that didn't mean he couldn't give him a verbal beating.

"Uzumaki, "

"Uzumakieee!" Naruto stressed the "ee" part.

"We have been given orders to take a female prisoner to High Charity. It would seem that the Arbiter has found a new Oracle. The Prophet of Truth has requested that the female be brought to them at the rendezvous point where the Prophet of Regret is. We have found a new Sacred Ring world. You would do well to remember that the Prophets make the calls, not you. So you would do well to remember your place. Now, go back to your quarters. Rest to heal your powers. We can learn why the female and crystal was able to hurt you."

Naruto held his gaze with him before storming off. This day just kept getting better. First he couldn't mark himself, then he got made fun of for being short, and now they had someone onboard that knew how to cause him immense pain. Yeah, he was enjoying life.

8. Chapter 8

Chapter 8

"So why did it drop again?" Anders let out a painful sigh as she pushed her reading glasses up a bit as they slid down the bridge of her nose. She honestly wondered what they were teaching these Spartan III's back on Onyx. But then again, this was well over their heads.

She straightened out her lab coat, and pulled out her laptop. As she opened it up, she pulled out the red crystal that she had been studying for the past eight hours since they made it to the center of the planet, which hadn't been that much of a walk. She gave the young Spartan a quick glance before giving him an answer. "As you know, it has been believed that the Forerunners, a race of people far more advanced than anything the Covenant could ever hope to muster, suddenly died one day without anyone being aware of them. They left certain objects behind for everyone to find and probably use to save their worlds. Some of the objects were objects of great power, like the Halo Arrays." She picked up a smaller crystal, but it was glowing a dark grey. "As we learned from our experience with the Kyuubi, it seems to give out some type of energy that makes him feel pain. We've been trying to understand this power, but we've had very little luck until now."

She tossed it away as Sasuke once again decided to ask the same question that was on all of their minds. "So why did we come to the center of the planet?" The center of the "planet" if you could call it that was hollowed out with giant crystals all of them glowing blood red save for the few smaller ones that only glowed a dark grey. As odd as a sight the giant crystals were, it was even stranger that when they began their journey, not an ounce of pressure was put on their bodies.

Everyone knew that the deeper you went into a planet, the more gravity and pressure worked on you. It worked like swimming. The deeper you went the more pressure was put on you. But this wasn't the case with Vorrac. It seemed that planet was composed of anti-gravity pressure units or something like that. Walking on the surface was

like walking in the center of it; supposing you didn't get lost like all the other people had that they had come across. All of them were dead, and most of them had been people that Anders knew. But the odd crystals still remained a partial mystery to her for the time being.

"We needed to get away from the surface unless we wanted to become part of the glassed surface." She explained as she typed. Sasuke looked around, shaking his head. Science wasn't his territory. Field action, kicking ass, and blowing the hell out of any enemy that the ONI agents pointed out was his territory. He'd take a warm gun over a laptop any day. "But to answer your real question, I think the reason Kyuubi dropped in pain was because of the energy that comes off of the crystals. Hereâ€¦ take a look at this." Sasuke leaned over, looking at the graph on the small device. He didn't understand what he was looking at. It looked like gibberish to him.

"Doc, please explain it." He sighed. He wondered how he got stuck guarding her. He was the one who came up with the idea to draw crystal shards. He was the one to make sure that it was fair. Yet everyone else got to go check the place while he got stuck watching her. Why was the team leader watching her, when he could be out finding a way out, kicking ass, and possibly saving their asses?

Anders tore her reading glasses off, and sighed. "The energy output is the same as Kyuubi's energy output. In his last few battles with UNSC forces, we've been able to get readouts on his power, and it matches these crystals."

"What. Are you trying to tell me that these stones give him his power? But I thought he got his power from the Bijuu he carries, supposing he's not a clone or something like that."

Anders shook her head. "No. I don't think he gets his power from these. I think that it was something that Forerunners hadn't planned on. It might have been an energy source at one time, but they feared its power, and sealed it down here in this planet. They could have also put it on other worlds as well. I mean, before we all started to head away from Earth, we had made hundreds of movies about monsters and demons being created by sleeping or bathing in toxic waste. It very well could be the same thing with the Kyuubi. But since we know he's a Jinchuuriki, it could be that the Bijuu he holds, along with Yugito and Kiri, could have justâ€¦ slept near them at one point in their lives." Sasuke blinked a few times, not really buying. He had heard some marines and other ONI agents talk about movies like this. Godzilla was the main one that they kept talking about; a monstrous being that had been created by radiation because of Nuclear Bombs. Scary, funny, and even odd, were the choices of words Sasuke had used to describe it when they tried to explain the movie to him, but he never really cared about movies anyways. It flew over his head, but he got the picture.

"But if that's the case, why hasn't Yugito dropped yet?" Anders shook her head. Sasuke looked back at the odd set of stones. "Can they be used against him?"

Anders knew his military mind was now clicking with that. Of course they could use it as a weapon, but breaking crystals and turning them down into bullet sized projectiles would take time. Plus there was

also the small fact that even if they did work, they would have to make sure they stayed in his body, supposing they got past his armor, which had no visible slots to allow him to move or bar skin, and supposing it got past his shields. Plus, they'd have to make sure they didn't back fire on him when they were in him. If being on the outside had caused energy weapons to warp, around him, rather than straight through him, then it would be a problem with their weapons as well.

But still, producing them would take time, and time was probably something they had just run out of. "I don't know why Yugito hasn't dropped because of it, but it could be that her Bijuu was put in front of a different source. With more data, I could generate a possible idea on why they do this. I could even come up with a way to give her better access to Nibi's power. But to be honest, I don't think she needs anymore than what she already has." Sasuke closed his eyes. "But it could be used as a weapon, supposing we ever get out of here, and somehow take enough of it back to Earth, supposing it's not glass right now."

"I'd rather stick to positive thinking."

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The three Kig-yar continued to rummage through the odd set of items in the cache room onboard _Holy Days_. They had been rescued after the invasion, and got to stay on the ship, so long as they didn't cause problems. And with them rummaging through Naruto's room was a problem. Naruto could handle them just entering his room by mistake or looking at his stuff. But when they tried to steal his stuff, he drew the line.

The first Kig-yar hit the ground after being stabbed in the back by the plasma blade, alerting the other two to his presence. Naruto kicked the body into the corner of his room, leaving a trailing of bright purple blood that began to pool around its body. The other two pulled out plasma pistols, ready to avenge their fallen comrade before the door opened. Naruto holstered his weapon before it could fully open, and jumped onto his bed with a big grin.

Ahielee stood in the door frame, blinking as he looked at the blood covered floor before looking up at the three in the room. Naruto had his mask off, and was grinning from ear to ear as he grabbed the necks of both Kig-yar before they could say or do anything. Ahiel pretended not to know what had happened. "What happened to him?"

Naruto looked over at the dead Kig-yar, and shook his head. "Oh, him, yeah, uhâ€ he stabbed himself in the back somehow with my weapon. But we don't think anyone is really to blame. So we all agreed that it was an accident." He gripped their necks a bit tighter. The two, Kig-yar could sense his blood lust, and quickly nodded, showing Ahielee that they agreed it was an accident. The Elite nodded, showing them that he understood, and asked them to take the body while he motioned for an Unggoy to clean up the blood. The room was cleaned rather quickly, and it once again looked as if it hadn't been touched.

Once the door shut for the last time, Ahielee turned to face Naruto fully. "How many of those scavengers have you killed?" Naruto

shrugged, and pulled the item he caught them stealing out from behind his back. It was three pointed piece of metal with a single hilt. It looked brand new at first glance, but when expected, anyone with eyes would be able to see the scratches, the scorch marks, and the chips in the weapon. It wasn't Naruto's most prized possession that he carried with him at all times. Ahielee looked it over, snorting at it before Naruto gave him a hard glare. Ahielee motioned for him to hand it to him, and Naruto seem reluctant to even do so. When he did, Ahielee looked it over, and then handed it back with his head titled to the side. "Its precious to you, isn't it?" Naruto put it on a wooden display, and lit the candles on both sides of it.

"It is precious to me." Naruto blew out the lighter he used to light it, and clamped the cap back down on it before setting it in front of the display. "It was a weapon used by my father. With this weapon, he was supposed to be able to actually transport himself from one of these to the next, no matter the distance. He called this ability, Flying-Thunder God. He was faster than lightning, and only a flash of yellow could be seen when he used it. If he were alive, he could have killed anything and everything that would have attacked my home."

Ahielee looked at the strange weapon. He was somewhat shocked by this. He wished he could have seen such an ability in action. To see someone faster than lightning would have been one for him. He would have savored such a thing.

Naruto got up, and sighed as he ran a hand through his hair. Ahielee nodded, and left him alone in his room. As the door hissed shut, Naruto pulled a small chip from his back pocket. It was the only thing that one of the Kig-yar had actually salvaged from the UNSC ship. It was small, about half the size of a baseball. He placed it on his dresser, and stood up to walk over to his small bag of scrolls.

White eyes like those of a blind person.

He had seen them once before, but it wasn't possible. Sure he could understand the three False Gods, but another from his world, it was unlikely. Gods were survivors, and never died. Mortals were doomed to the fate of time.

(-)

Yugito and Haku walked through the crystal passages, looking for anything that needed shooting at, or just a sound ass kicking. They had been trained to fight, move on, fight some more, move on to the next target, and just fight. Sitting around, waiting for something was a Spartans own enemy. So when they were offered scouting duty, they jumped to it, and ran to check the place out, acting more like kids on a playground, rather than teenage super weapons that could kick your ass with a tissue box.

Haku had a crystal in hand, and was looking around as Yugito walked around, her SMGs pointed at anything that moved. Neither spoke, or even came out of hiding for fear of an enemy attack. Holding the red stone wasn't going to give them away so long as Haku didn't start throwing it around.

Yugito stopped getting Haku's attention. She gave him sharp motions

with her hands, and crouched down low as she walked up against the crystal walls. It was tunneled, and lead to another glassed surface, she thought. Haku raised his sniper rifle, looked through the Oracle scoop, fiddled with it, and then looked back through it. He gave her a hard nod, and Yugito raised her weapons, ready to move in for the kill.

Both whipped around, guns ready. Nothing. They moved forward, slow and steady, their weapons never once going down even an inch. Yugito presser her body up against the walls, one SMG raised in front of her, the other behind her, pointing at their exit. Haku pulled out a pistol and leveled it at the exit while keeping his assault rifle in front of him. Both walked slowly, waiting for anything to jump out at them.

They came to the end of the tunnel, and it turned into a T section. Yugito motioned for Haku to follow her. She didn't want to risk splitting up. Who knew what might be down here? Yugito walked along the wall in the same motion as before, Haku doing the same on the other side until a whisper from behind got their attention. They turned to the whisper, and raised their weapons. Nothing, again. Haku looked back behind them, and spotted a shadow. He raised his weapons, but the shadow was gone. Yugito felt something tingle in the back of her mind, and spun around again, this time leveling her weapon a small hole in the side of the tunnel. Haku turned to her, weapons raised and waiting for something to come out.

Yugito gave a single motion, and he nodded as a reply. Haku holstered his pistol, used both arms for his rifle, and activated the flashlight. Bodies lay inside the tunnel. The two eyed them for a moment before standing upright. A whisper sounded from behind, and they spun to face it again. Nothing. Something was here. Something was watching them. This was just one of the many times that both wished they had a motion tracker like Kurt had for his armor. It was one of the cut backs.

A blur leapt out in front of them, stopped, looked at them, and then vanished before their eyes. Haku charged after it, Yugito following shortly after she got over the shock of it. It was human, but it kept an odd mask over its face. It wore rags for clothing, and looked homeless. An explosion from behind forced Yugito to stop, and watch as another one appeared. It was shorter, and was checking out the bodies before vanishing.

Gunfire sounded from ahead, and an explosion sounded a second later. Yugito ran towards the sound, and found Haku up against the wall, rifle in hand, and pointed at a man. Rags for clothing, a cracked orange mask with a single eyehole and a Gravity Hammer in hand. It looked pissed about something. Yugito raised her weapon, but the figure blurred towards her, raised the weapon, and then dropped when Konohamaru knocked it out with a blow to the head. The two looked Konohamaru over, and then remembered that he was also a part of their recon.

The three looked at each other, removed the hammer once they had the silent conversation, and picked him up. Whistling air sounded, and the trio dropped him, rolled, and pointed rifles down the length of the tunnel. A band of humans stood there, some looking on in fear, others with weapons ranging from crystal to plasma weapons. They were frightened. Yugito looked down at the man that they had captured, and

then up at them. She tossed the hammer to them, one of them caught it. It was a young girl with smug marks on her face, rags for clothing, and messy brown hair. She looked the weapon over, and then handed it to a tall man with a cane made from crystals, bandages over his head, and wrinkled skin.

"_Report!"_ Sasuke's voice shouted. Yugito motioned for Konohamaru and Haku to watch them.

"We found some survivors down here. Can you track us down? They seem very frightened, and I don't want to leave them right now."

There was a long pause, and then Sasuke came back. "_Yeah. Doc says she'd like to see them too. Is it safe?"_

"One of them had a Gravity Hammer."

"_So it's safe now?"_

"Yeah, I think it's safe." Yugito watched them all look at each other, some having smiles, others huddling in fear around adults. Yugito walked back over to her team, and motioned for them to check them over. She looked them over. Most of them seemed to be about her age. Others had to be younger. Newborns perhaps, but she wasn't worried about ages. She was worried about their health. How long had they been down here? Where had they come from? And why were they only now appearing?

"What happened to Tobi?" The orange mask wearing man asked. Yugito looked down at him as he got up. "Tobi's head hurts. Tobi needs medicine. Yes he does. Tobi needs medicine." He went back to sleep. Yugito looked down at him, and then over at the others. Konohamaru was stuck on a few people, trying his best to get them to take the ration bar he was offering them. Haku was trying the same thing with a few people that were blind. They looked worried, confused, and ready to attack.

This should be fun, she told herself.

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Naruto shut his eyes, and messaged the bridge of his nose as he rolled the scroll up. She was a Hyuuga. She was from his world. He now knew why he'd seen her eyes before. If she was from his world, and she was in a cell, he could look into her mind, find the truth, and know the truth. If there was one thing that Naruto was not, it was stupid. Even though he promised his faith only to the Covenant for saving him, that didn't mean he had to trust them. He was no fool. They had burned and glassed many worlds, and not once had the UNSC ever done there terrible deed again. If it was someone else that was responsible, he would make them pay. He would make them suffer.

He stood up, and walked out of his room, leaving the scroll on his bed when the alarms sounded.

"_Uzumakiee, Ahielee, Sore, Varo, report to the hanger immediately; the Prophet of Regret is under attack, and needs aid!"_ Naruto's eyes widened. A Prophet was in trouble. But why? What had Regret done this time? And who would be foolish enough to attack a Prophet of the

Covenant?

A/N

Sorry to leave you all hanging there. Sorry that Naruto and Hinata didn't talk in this chapter, but that comes later on. And yes, Tobi has the Hammer. Who else would you give it to, I must ask? I'd give it to him. What better weapon to give a complete nutcase that speaks in third person? I don't see anything bad happening, do you guys. Also, if you can name the person who used Naruto's line when he killed the one jackal, what season it came from, and series, you'll get a cookie.

This is a reminder to some that this is a repost for a story from like five years ago, meaning that Tobi at the time was still believed to be Madara. He is no Obito. He is Tobi/Madara. Please keep that in mind.

9. Chapter 9

Chapter 9

William C. Tanner stared at the two white lights in front of him. His mind was a mess. The last few days had been nothing but a blur for him. Just a few days ago he was sitting on the Cairo, watching as Spartan-117, Avery Johnson, and Miranda Keys were given medals for their valor in the face of impossible odds or for actions carried out by a loved one that had made the ultimate sacrifice. After a jarring Covenant invasion hit them, he was forced down to the surface ODST style, for it was the only way they loved to travel, and was ordered to help defend New Mombassa from any forces that got through the MAC Guns. Of course a lot got through thanks to the bombs, and of course, he'd get stuck with that no speaking, AI carrying, killing machine of a man, Spartan-117.

After watching a small Elite whop the shit out of some Spartan III's, he was put inside a Pelican, under the orders of Miranda Keys, to follow the Prophet ship, and kill him. Of course, this all sounded good, but it was a pain in the ass for him. As soon as they exited Slipspace, he was greeted by the sight of hundreds of civilians that had been killed during the transition into Slipspace, and then watch several buildings come within inches of striking the ship. He hated ships, but being an ODST meant you'd spend a lot of time on them before getting the ride of your life on a one way trip into enemy lines to hold the line until you could be reinforced.

He got stuck with the no speaking bastard of a Spartan again, this time on a new Ring World, Delta Halo, and had helped secure something that looked like an old temple with vines growing all over the walls, trees punching through the ceiling, and crawling with Covenant forces. After a bone jarring ride down, a quick firefight, and a drop of ride, he was humiliated by trying to humiliate his superior, Avery Johnson. What he saw did look like a postcard, and he was just ballsy enough to make the comment about wishing he was here right now.

After fighting air patrols, tanks, Honor Guard, Grunts, Jackals, Buggers, more Grunts, Jackals, Buggers, and Elites, he was finally nearing the end of his crazy mission to help the Spartan kill a

Prophet. It was something that most had wished for, for years. He dreamed of standing over the Prophet, his gun smoking, and the blood of the creature staining his clothes. He would never wash it out. But right now, from behind his cover, he could only stare at the two odd lights in front of him, one growing bigger.

A plasma bolt melted his face, and he dropped backwards, dead. The cloaked figure that fired the bolt stood up, his armor becoming visible as the lime green man of steel battled with the last Lekgolo. A quick jump over the creature, and shotgun blast to its exposed back killed it. The force of the gun nearly tore the poor colony of worms in half, forcing the body to topple back on its self in an odd looking formation.

John turned to face him, his gun at the ready. He took one look at him, and Cortana spoke his words for him. "Kyuubi" | "

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Yugito stared at the small children as they ate the last of her ration bars. They had given all of the kids their rations, as they were the hungriest of the some fifty survivors that they had found. A few were quiet, still watching them as they held their weapons tightly in their hands. Anders was checking them over as best she could. With what little equipment she had, however, she could only do so much. The one known as Tobi was sitting on a crystal watching her work and more or less curious about the device she kept typing on. The kids were the same, some whispering words like "Cool" or "Neat" as the screens changed, showing an odd array of colors, graphs, charts, and other things. The adults were holding their weapons, say for the ones that were getting medical treatment from Hanabi.

Anders shook her head. "There isn't enough data for me to know how to know the range the crystals have on him." Sasuke sighed at this. He was hoping that they had a great range. It seemed that the range was barely under two yards. Not a good enough distance to keep him still or pinned. For that matter, they didn't even know what it really did to him. It could have been making him stronger, and his body just couldn't compensate for it. It was the case, using the crystals wasn't just a bad idea; it would be the worst idea the UNSC would ever make. He was already strong enough to take down Spartans as is; they didn't need him strong enough to take a ship out of the sky.

"Well, that blows the plan of trapping him to shoot him to death out of the question." He muttered as he checked his ammo again. Once he was through, he slid it home, and put one in the chamber. Sasuke took a deep breath, and then looked over the survivors again. The old man looked familiar to him, but he couldn't place him. That was about the only one he could barely recognize for some odd reason.

"Tobi wants to know why you wear odd masks." Tobi spoke up suddenly, his child like voice becoming more of an annoyance, rather than his odd manner of speaking. He was holding the hammer again, and Tenten had her rifle pointed at his head in case he tried something. They doubted he would, but Tenten was wishing she could just put a bullet in his head for the way he talked. It was more annoying listening to him speak rather than his voice.

"Is it possible that they're pervious inhibitors of this planet?"

Konohamaru asked. He had the girl with brown hair hanging off of his arms. She wasn't heavy, and he actually had no problems holding her up. It was just that he'd been doing this for the last twenty minutes. It was more or less just annoying at this point.

"Tobi is not from this world. No he isn't. Tobi comes from a land where people fight wars with each other. They make each other all dead." He spoke slowly this time, unsure of his words alone. "But Tobi has been to other place, a tropical place where land is also above head." He placed a finger on his mask, almost as if he were thinking. "Tobi could take you there."

Sasuke looked over at him. In the two hours they had been stuck with them, not really learning anything from them, other than that this guy was a real talker, they had never once thought to ask where they came from. But if this odd orange mask wearing guy knew a way out of the hellhole they were in. "Can you take us there now?" Sasuke asked. The other Spartans got the message. They were probably about to get out of here, and possible go up against Covenant forces.

"Tobi can take you. We can all take you. But bad people are on other side. Very mean. Very strong. Tobi stole hammer from one." That made there day. Brutes were possible on the other side. If that was the case, then this wasn't such a good idea. "But Madara will protect you. Madara will protect us all." Tobi added. "This way, follow Tobi." Sasuke shared a worried look with the others as the survivors followed Tobi. Once Anders was ready, she stood up, and followed, trailing in between the Spartans.

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Naruto leapt back over his cover, getting out of the eye sight of John as he opened fire on him. Naruto's armor flickered, and he turned invisible. John grunted as his visor switched from normal vision to heat vision, which was a load of fun when plasma was flying around. He was lucky twenty seconds ago when the marine landed down beside him, unaware of his presence. When he had turned to face him, Naruto shot him clean in the face after slowly, and almost comically, turning the gun to face him as if he were bored already.

He was actually quiet bored before realizing that a Demon was here. Had he not known the Demon was here, he would have left already. But since he was here, he was a threat, and he needed to be taken care of before he could press forward towards Regret.

He now regretted the fact that Raukee suggested they split up to find the Prophet of Regret. It would take them two minutes to get here. In that time, he could either kill the bastard or die by his hands. Naruto stood up, and returned fire towards the Demon, forcing him to take cover as well. His armor had taken a beating, but his invisibility still worked. His shields weren't recharging, making the fight more difficult. It wasn't the first time he'd fought without his shields though. This made it hard, yes, but more enjoyable.

John jumped up, took aim, and fired. Naruto was quicker and managed to get behind cover before jumping out of his cover. John was in the middle of switching clips when the Jinchuuriki charged him. Naruto slammed into him hard, smashing him into a bench-looking stone structure, the force of his slam almost taking them through it. John

grunted, and brought both hands down in a hammer blow into his back. Naruto hit the ground, rolled away, and threw a leg swipe out at him. John jumped over it, and kicked Naruto in the gut. His air left his lungs, but he grabbed his ankle, and jumped up to kick him in the face. His head jerked back from the blow, but he quickly recovered.

Naruto did away with his invisibility. It would do him no good in a close range fight. John threw a punch at his face, but Naruto caught it, and kicked him three times in the side. John reversed his hold and gave his arm a twist, but Naruto managed to break out of it, and palm him in the chest. John had a small hand imprint from the hit in the center of his chest, but was okay. Naruto threw another punch, but John caught it, and threw him into the structure he slammed him into previously, putting Naruto all the way through it. Rubble bounced off his armor, and he was slow to get to his feet. John threw a punch at his head, but Naruto ducked under it, and slammed a fist into his gut, one part of his armor that wasn't all that heavily armored. It hurt a lot more this time.

John grabbed him back the back of his armor, and threw him into the center structure, looking somewhat like a mini clock tower, just minus the clock part. Naruto flew through it, taking it down, and got to his feet slowly, but grabbed a rock the size of a football. John picked up his rifle, reloaded, took aim, and got hit in the head by the chunk of stone. He recoiled from the blow, momentarily off target, but quickly back on, and fired. Naruto ducked down behind the tallest part of the former tower, and raised a plasma rifle over the edge, returning fire until the thirty-six percent charge was spent.

Naruto jumped over the edge, and got hit in the face, his mask cracking as he flew backwards, hitting the ground with a hard crunch as parts of his armor broke. Electricity sparked down his armor as it fought to stay together, and recharge his shields. John ran at him, reloading his weapon as he did. Naruto got up, and was hit in the head again, this time throwing him over the edge of the ledge that overlooked a blue ocean. John finished reloading his weapon, looked over the edge, and got kicked in the head when Naruto reappeared, knocking his weapon free, and sending it clattering to the center of the structure.

John smacked into the ground hard, Cortana yelling at him for not seeing that coming. John paid her no mind. He grabbed Naruto's ankle, but Naruto kicked him in the head, and escaped the hold, jumping backwards as he pulled out his energy swords. John stood up, small pebbles falling to the ground from his armor, and pulled a plasma grenade out. Naruto glared at him, and waited for him to throw them. John threw them, and pulled out a pistol as Naruto jumped away from the grenades, taking cover behind the former tower. He waited for him to stick his head. He didn't.

The ground beneath his feet cracked, and he looked down just as a red hand smashed through it. He jumped back, firing at the transparent red hand before seeing Naruto with both arms in the ground, and three-tails of his holy power forming around him. Naruto tore his arms out of the ground, picked up his weapons, and threw one at John. John dropped to the ground, dodging it, and fired his pistol. Naruto spun when one of the rounds got through his damaged armor at the shoulder. He threw a transparent arm at him, and John ran straight at

it, reloading his pistol. He jumped forward at the last second, diving under it, and coming up in front of Naruto. He punched him in the face, destroying his mask in the process.

Naruto was thrown back from the blow, and slammed head first into the ground. John stared at him. As Naruto got up, John could only stare at him. His hair was spiky blond with red tips. He had dark rings around his eyes, one that was blue with a slit, and the other was red with a slit for a pupil. Naruto had long fangs sticking out of his mouth, and the head wound was already healed. John raised his pistol, but Naruto jumped back as he opened fire, dodging the first set of shots, but getting tagged on the last two in the side.

Naruto landed down on the ground, the wounds already healing as his holy powers pushed the bullets out of him, as he scooped up a plasma pistol. He fired three shots, and got tackled from the side. John had run around, and got the drop on him. He tackled him to the ground, put a massive boot on his chest, and pointed the pistol at his head. Naruto grinned, and gave out a loud roar, throwing John off of him, and slamming him up against bench-like stone structure.

Naruto's wounds fully healed, and he raised both arms to grab the two rods on his back. John got up, raised his pistol, and realized he no longer held it. Looking around, he found a plasma rifle. Even better. He took aim, and fired. Naruto jumped over the edge of the structure he was beside, and ran at John while dodging the plasma bolts that sizzled near his shoulder and head. Minor burns formed, but were quickly healed. John swung the rifle, but missed as Naruto head butted him in the head, doing more damage to his own body, rather than John. The Spartan reeled back a bit, and watched as Naruto activated the two pieces of metal. Ionized gasses hissed as two long beams of energy formed from each metal rod, turning into two long katana-like weapons.

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Raukee had formed up with the other three members of his team, and the four were looking for Uzumakiee at the moment. His last known transmission had come from just ahead, but they were still two minutes out. More and more humans had continued to appear, stopping them, and delaying them at every turn. It wasn't hard to deal with them, but it was an annoyance either way. An explosion sounded from up ahead, and his team took cover.

Ahielee peered around the edge, his invisible body looking like a ghost in the fog and smoke generated from their grenades when they exploded near beaten up stone walls and pillars and water. He saw nothing. He motioned that it was okay, but stopped when he saw three marines appear, their bodies broken from the blast. He corrected his mistake, and motioned for them to follow. Raul took lead, and watched as the three survivors tried to crawl away to safety. Raul shot each in the head, melting it like butter with ease.

He gave a low growl, and began running towards the spot where he hoped Naruto was. He motioned for them to stop again, this time because he saw a shimmer of light reflect in an odd way on a pillar. He wasn't sure what it was, but it was damn well hard for him to spot. If he hadn't been paying attention, it might have cost him dearly. He crept closer, and grabbed it by the head. There was a loud scream of fear before gunfire erupted to his left. He looked, and

found a partially hidden shimmer of light. He put the object in his hands in front of him, stopping the barrage.

He looked over them, and watched as more shimmers of light moved around, taking up flanking positions. He had to admit, they were cunning. He raised his plasma rifle and fired. The shimmers took cover and returned fire when he was kicked in the stomach by whatever it was he was holding. His team opened fire, blasting and melting their cover, revealing a small girl with brown hair. Sangheili with needlers appeared, took aim, and fired at the little girl. A blur landed down in front of her, and took the barrage while returning fire. Its body was covered with the spikes, but he acted like nothing was wrong with him as he killed the three Sangheili that had appeared.

He took cover, reloaded his weapon, picked the girl up, and opened fire as he returned to the others. The shimmers all faded away, leaving Raul and his team alone. It was quiet, and he didn't like it.

Static hit him over the radio, and he could hear a fight breaking out. He growled in annoyance, and ran towards the place he hoped Naruto was. When he got there, he could only stare at the sight of him fighting the Demon with his damaged armor, and three-tails. His team did the same, momentarily shocked at his power. A purple specter appeared, its two tails thrashing about angrily as the Demon inside the center of it slinked over his way on all fours.

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Lee, Neji, Tenten, and Hanabi all looked over the survivors, checking them over to make sure they were all okay. Tobi, or now as he preferred to be called Madara, had led them straight to a green ray of light back on Vorrac. It had been a gut wrenching trip through the odd matter transporter, and when they got here, they made damn sure to clear the place of Covenant. When the survivors had gotten through, along with the other team, Sasuke decided to take his team out to search the area. Before he even called back, they got attacked by Covenant. They had gotten away, not really wanting to risk a firefight with civilians so close by. They had gotten away, and were now taking a breather as the adrenaline passed them over.

Lee wasn't even taking a breather. He seemed fine, despite the fact that he had a cluster of crystal shards in his chest. "Man, I think I got nicked." He muttered. Neji looked him over, wondering if his bad humor was kicking in before watching him just fall over. His bio signs all flat lined and his body went limp. Tenten was quickly at his side, rolling him over to check him out. He was dead. Neji stared at him, unable to grasp how five seconds ago he was standing with the shards in his chest, breathing normally, talking normally, and even holding stable bio signs, but then just fall over dead. It didn't make sense to him.

The old man with the cane approached his limp body, and shook his head sadly. "I am sorry that our rescuing came at such a heavy price." He informed her as she put his body in the far corner of the place they were hiding in. The old man closed his eyes, and whispered a silent prayer for the young Spartan before turning to his people. Madara looked back at him, raising his hammer in question. "We know this land well. We can help you get to our village. It isn't very far

from here."

"We need to wait for Sasuke's team though." Anders put in as she continued going over the data she had collected from the runes on the wall. She was typing much faster now, and looked more on edge then before.

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Naruto looked over at Yugito, his blue eye turning red as his three-tails slammed into the ground, helping him roar angrily as the ground beneath them cracked. Yugito held her ground, and then waited for him to charge her. John raised his rifle, but a shimmer of light grabbed it, and shook its head. He held his fire, waiting to see what they were planning. Naruto roared angrily again as he made a mad dash for her. He got within two yards of her, and dropped like a rock, skidding along the ground as he screamed in pain. The shimmer of light broke apart, and Sasuke released his hold on John's gun while Konohamaru and Haku appeared around him, holding red crystals near him.

"Sasuke, right?" Cortana asked. He gave a small nod as he kept his gaze with the screaming Jinchuuriki. "How did you get here? I thought we left you back on Earth."

"We got orders to head to Vorrac as it was getting attacked. The surface got glassed, but we went underground into a cave network where we learned he hates these things. We also learned of some survivors from another world had been living down there for some time. We have them with us, and we need to get them to safety. Can you call two pelicans to come get them?" Cortana was already on it. Sasuke turned to face John for a bit, and looked towards the massive ship that hung over the temple in the center of the ocean. "We'll make sure he remains here. You have a task already imagine. Get it done, we got your back." John nodded, and ran towards the floating structures at the edge of the cliff.

"_Sasuke, this is Neji. We lost Lee." _The team looked at him for a moment, but said nothing. _"Is the area ahead of us clear of hostiles?"_

"This is Sasuke. The area is clear, and we've captured the Kyuubi. Advise; we have two pelicans inbound to pick up survivors. ETA, unknown. I suggest you hurry up and get over here." Sasuke cut the chatter, and looked down at the screaming teen. Sasuke walked up to him, his gun still in hand. His powers had begun acting wildly, and he could only scream in pain as he tried to reach for his weapons. Sasuke removed them carefully, and threw them away. Stepping back, he stared down at him as he twisted and turned, fighting the pain as best he could. Gunfire erupted from behind them, and Sasuke jumped forward in front of his team as they jammed the crystals around the helpless Jinchuuriki. They raised their weapons, and opened fire on four Elites that were returning fire with Team Silver. Attacking from both sides was a bright idea, but they also had to worry about their rounds also hitting their allies.

A Phantom swooped in overhead, picking up Naruto, along with the crystals. The return fire stopped, and Sasuke ordered all of them to stop and take cover as plasma flew down on them from the ship. Four Elites jumped out from their cover, making a break for the ship. To

stay and fight from both sides was madness, even to them. Naruto had rubbed off on them a bit. "Live today, fight tomorrow" his best words spoken when Raul became team leader. Even if the others hated it, they all understood what it meant.

The moment they were inside, they quickly left. Spartans had the power to take down a single Phantom, and the pilot didn't want to be so dishonored by being taken down like that.

The moment it was out of sight, three pelicans, the third coming because it had been on its way to drop off weapons for John, came in hard and fast, their ramps already down before they touched the ground. The survivors came out of their hiding places, and the other team came out carrying Lee. Sasuke motioned for them to get inside, and watched a few ODSs give medical treatment to those that needed it. As the first two closed their ramps, the remaining survivors got on the last pelican. Sasuke looked the ODSs over, and then looked back at the structure in the center of the ocean.

"Can you guys make a hot drop for me? I need to get over there to help John. Our target got away." The ODSs nodded happily, ready to help out either way. Sasuke grunted his thanks, and walked over to a few of the green tubes with guns and ammo in them. He took all he could hold on shotgun ammo, pistol ammo, grenades, and rifle ammo. His team did the same, and then loaded up in the pelicans. John was already on the other side, and probably needed _some_ help.

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Naruto swung an angry fist into the side of the ship, the crystals hurting him as they flew up into the belly of their Phantoms' mother ship, _Holy Days_. The Covenant fleet was just minutes away, and they had been ordered to wait for reinforcements. And because it was too dangerous to really open the hatch at their speeds, they couldn't get rid of the damn crystals. The pilot had been doing all he could just to keep the Spartans pinned down, and couldn't move the crystals away from him until the others got on. When they did, they ordered him to open the hatch, but a transmission put that on hold. Now it had cost them.

Sore lay broken in the back of the ship, his body limp, but he still breathed. Naruto had beaten him badly for bumping into him as he staggered around the ship, trying to get away from the crystals. When he did this, he spoke in a deeper voice that sounded just evil. He spoke in a different language as well. After giving him the beating, the other three Sangheili began trying to keep their distance. The pilot, however, could only watch the console in front of him, and pray that Naruto didn't attack him.

The Phantom thundered into the dock, and, released them all. Naruto fell out, Raul coming out a second later to grab the downed Jinchuuriki as he tried to get away, and pull him to safety. Unggoy watched in wonder while Kig-Yar watched in fear. A few other Sangheili watched in worry as the others came out, Ahriel holding the crystal shards, and running as far away with them as he could. When he looked back, Naruto was on his feet, shaking the blood that had been running down the side of his head away, and was glaring at the Unggoy that tried to check him over.

"Are you alright?" Raukee asked. Naruto pushed him away, holding the side of his head as his headache continued to hit him. The pain from the crystals had caused him to gain a headache, and it hurt a lot. "Get medicine for him now." He ordered. The Unggoy nodded, mumbling about how they were always ordered around, but went to get the medicine as ordered.

"I'm fine. My head just hurts." Naruto waved the Unggoy off, sending it scurrying away when it tried to give him the medicine by force by raising his holy powers to it. Naruto stood up, his hand still on his head. The other Sangheili in the hanger walked over to him, the pilot pulling out the beaten form of Sore who could only mutter something about angering a God. The Sangheili asked if he was alright, wondering how they could help him. Naruto walked off, ignoring them for now.

Raukee watched him go with sad and worried eyes. "He shall be fine." A blue armored Sangheili told him. Raukee nodded. Naruto could jump up from anything. This would be no different.

Ahielee approached him, holding one of the crystals. A single Kig-Yar had run to check the ship out, always looking for something shiny or valuable to take. It found one of the crystals, and ran away with it, happy to have found such an odd, and yet very shiny collectable. "We must find a way to make these ineffective against him." He told him. The Special Operations Commander nodded, his eyes glaring down at the crystals. "I will take these to the Huragok, along with his armor, and have them see if they can fix it while making him safe from their effects."

Raukee nodded, and watched him leave. He would have to get the remains of Naruto's armor in a little bit.

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Sasuke, Haku, Konohamaru, and Yugito dropped twenty feet from the back of the pelican. The place was covered with turrets, most of it aimed at the barge that was coming towards them. As they hit the ground, the pelican roared away, putting some safe distance between them and the enemy.

Sasuke raised his rifle, and opened fire on a wave of Jackals that were armed with beam rifles. They had been too high up originally to be seen, and when they came in, the roar of the engines had only been heard by a few of them. So it was rather easy to sweep and clear the enemy out of the way for John and the ODSTs that had jumped ship to help him out when a swarm of Buggers had appeared. When the weapon emplacements were taken out, John and the lone ODST survivor, Dallas, walked out.

John looked over their handiwork, pleased to know that the Spartan III's were just as good as he was in killing a large army of Jackals and Grunts.

Small puffs sounded above them, and they all looked up as hundreds, maybe even thousands of ships, followed by a giant jellyfish-looking ship appeared in the sky. "That's the largest Covenant fleet I've ever seenâ€¦ the largest anyone's ever seen." Cortana told them. They were too stunned by the appearance of so many ships to even give a reply really. Sasuke and John both checked the ammo they carried.

"Get inside the temple! Kill Regret before they have a chance to stop us!"

They didn't need to be reminded. John made a mad dash for the ramp, and was forced to take cover when white blobs of plasma zipped past them. Sasuke growled in annoyance, and turned invisible before rolling out to the other side of the ramp to get away before making a mad dash towards the two turrets that the Grunts were using. He rifle butted the first one, and shot the other with a single shot to the head. The other Spartans came running as Sasuke yanked the gun turret free.

John raised his sniper rifle, and put two rounds through an Elite's head, tearing half of its face off with the second shot. Sasuke looked over his shoulder, stunned that he hadn't seen it until John shot. Once the others were up to him, they all moved towards the far corner, and raised their weapons to take down a single Honor Guard that was in mid swing with an energy sword. The barrage of fire threw him back, and he collapsed over dead when he slammed into a weapon crate.

"I'll take out the Prophet. You just cover me." John ordered. He hadn't been used to giving orders for some time. The last time he'd given anyone orders had been the last time he saw his team, Blue Team, back when they pulled the stunt with Ascendant Justice. He knew how to do it, but it felt odd to him now. They gave him green acknowledgment lights on his HUD, and part of him saw them as his former team. He missed them.

They walked up a ramp, and stared at the large doors before Konohamaru pulled out a set of charges. He placed them on the door, they all ran back, and he gave them a countdown with his lights. Red, Amber, and Green all winked off, and he pressed the detonator. Thunder and light echoed in the chambers, and the two doors were blown apart, splinters and molten metal flying around. The cries of pain from wounded Honor Guard sounded soon after.

Cortana told them that Honor Guards were crawling all over the place. Hundreds of them probably. Too many for her to actually count, given the fact that those that came rushing towards the small team of Spartans were quickly killed by a barrage of tracer rounds and plasma bolts from the team. It was a slow process, by Spartan standards, but they were able to move up the ramp, and see their target. It was sitting in a hovering chair, singing.

Honor Guard came rushing from both sides on the ledge that overlooked the ground beneath them. Sasuke, Konohamaru and Yugito combined fire to take them down or keep them pinned down while John, Haku, and Dallas combined fire to take down the others. The numbers didn't seem to grow shorter though, no matter how many they mowed down. Regret called them something, and fired a beam of energy at them. The blast took out the ground beneath them, and they fell.

John was the first one up, and returned fire on the Prophet. An energy shield protected him, and he growled at it. "You'll need to get close to him. Attacking from a distance won't work." Cortana advised. Sasuke and the others got up, keeping the Honor Guard either pinned down and just dead from their barrage of fire. Dallas was dead however, crushed by the fall rubble. John looked at Regret, watching him fiddle with his chair a bit. He had to be recharging his weapon

after that.

He made a mad dash for him, Honor Guard getting his way. He drew off most of them, just by running towards the Prophet. This allowed Sasuke and the others to shoot the Elites in the back as they turned to protect their hierarch. By the time most turned anyways, it was too late. John was clinging to the side of the Prophet's chair, a pistol to his head, and gripping his long lateral neck. The Honor Guard stopped, well aware of what he would do if they went forward. John looked back at the Spartans, and nodded to them. Sasuke nodded back, and ordered his team to vanish. John looked down at the Prophet, and then looked back to where Sasuke had been. He pulled the trigger. The chair remained floating and he punched the control console, getting it to move forward. It lifted up and soared over the angry Honor Guard.

He jumped onto the remains of the ramp, and ran like hell towards the exit. Sasuke and his team were nowhere to be seen, and a large Covenant Destroyer hung overhead, its main weapon charging. John didn't think, he just ran. He ran as fast as he could as blue plasma raced down from it, looking a lot like rain as it began melting the temple, and boiling the ocean. He had no choice as he came to the end of the temple. He jumped into the water, hoping that they wouldn't fire down on the water while destroying the temple with him supposedly in it. He smacked into the water, and passed out as his suit overheated, causing him to blackout.

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Sasuke cursed as he watched the temple get vaporized. He had radioed for a pelican, and it came down to pick them up. He ordered it to swing around once so the Covenant didn't try to take it out while it was stationary. He wanted to rescue John, but when he didn't see him on the first pass, he ordered him to make a second when the ship began melting the structure. So he could now only watch as the temple was melted down, and destroyed.

He shook his head. Today had been a minor victory. A Prophet was dead, but John had been lost, along with Lee, and several ODSTs. Hundreds of lives lost just to kill one Prophet. Sasuke swore that he would make this right now. He would take out the others for John, and all of the others that they had killed like him. He would make things right. He would see this through to the end, even if it killed him in the end.

"Sir, Keys needs some help with a mission. She wants you guys to help her get something before the Covenant can. We're returning to _In Amber Clad, _alright?" Sasuke nodded, reading the name of the pilot from his helmet. His name was Jefferson. "Also, she said she got the survivors. They're all getting medical treatment at the moment, and that she called for help. Hopefully, we'll get some aid real soon. We'll get those people out of here." Sasuke patted him on the shoulder, and returned to the others in the back. Konohamaru was checking his ammo, Haku was cleaning his guns, and Yugito was resting.

"We're heading to the ship. We'll be helping out with a mission, and helping Commander Keys out until help arrives. Hopefully, the message we left for fleet command will get there from before we left Vorrac." He told them. They nodded, and the old man that was with them nodded

his thanks to them. "Don't worry, sir, we'll get you to safety as soon as we can."

"You have already done more than enough. I can die happy knowing that my people will be safe." He told them.

"I wish I could say the same for ours." Konohamaru told him. "I left my grandpa back on our homeworld when the UNSC came to save us. I don't even know if he's still alive." The old man looked him over. "Where are you from anyways? What's your name?"

"Konohagakure no Sato, and my name is Sarutobi Hiruzen, former Sandaime Hokage." There was silence until Konohamaru stood up, removed his helmet, revealing his short cut hair, a scar over his left eye, and a big smile. "What's your name?"

"Oji-san, it's good to see you again." Hiruzen didn't need a name now. He remembered him just by calling him that. Seeing that big grin, those large eyes, he could only stare in shock at him. In a life time of fighting evil across the galaxy, traveling billions of miles away at any given moment in time, and always thinking about the future, never once did it dawn on any of them, the past was always behind them, watching over them. In the large, infinity galaxy, a group of people from the same planet that had thought the other dead, had finally been reunited.

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Naruto was sitting in the SpecOps room on High Charity, his eyes closed, and his head down. He was tired, still in pain, and felt like he was ready to kill someone. Rtas was sitting on the other side of his large metal desk, staring at the young boy, but also keeping his gaze on Ahriel, since he stood a good five yards away from him. Raul was beside Naruto, watching him, and trying to help him with his pain. Thel had been there for a bit, but Rtas had sent him away.

Rtas closed his eyes, and sighed. "They have found a way to harm you without touching you?" He repeated. Naruto flinched at the words alone. It was a disgrace to him, but a shocker to him. He had personally witnessed Naruto get shot by the infestations weapons, get stabbed by Jiralhanaes that still hated him for being more important than they were, and yet Naruto could be brought down by a small crystal no bigger than his own fingers. It was too much for him to really take after watching all of his abilities, seeing him survive things no one else could survive.

"Yes. This crystal causes him immeasurable pain. We do not know why it does this, but we are trying to find a way to stop it from hurting him permanently." Raukee reported. Naruto clutched his stomach as Ahielee looked at the stone he kept hidden by his hands. If it was revealed, than it didn't have a real range to it, but if it was concealed, the range was limited to two yards. "We also believe that it damages his seal." He added in a whisper. Rtas closed his eyes.

This was bad. Yeah, this was very bad. He, along with this team, and Thel, along with Xedralee, were the only Sangheili that knew what lay inside his body. It was sealed away, and Naruto had told them to keep it a secret, more out of fear of what the others would think of

Xedraelee for being tricked, rather than his own life. This was part of the reason why Rtas made Naruto work with Raukee and Ahielee. They knew his secret, and Naruto had made them promise to kill him should the seal be broken. Rtas and Thel made the same promise, Thel not really wanting to make the promise, and Rtas seemingly more happy to do such a thing for him should he require it.

But if the seal was near broken, it would mean things would be a lot worse for them. "I'm pulling your team over with mine. Know that this is not a promotion or anything, but a way to keep our promise to Uzumakiee secure. We cannot let such a terrible beast loose, not even if it could be contained on this Sacred Ring. We have a mission, but it won't be for a bit. You will have enough time to rest and dress your wounds. I will send for you when we are ready." The team nodded and was about to get up and leave when Naruto suddenly slammed an angry fist into the table, denting it in as a Jiralhanae walked in.

It was a Chieftain. Naruto couldn't remember his name, and to be honest, he never cared for the mongrels anyways. He had a red gem hanging from around his neck, just part of being exposed to them however. Raukee was ready to jump on him for having it, but if he did, it would surely give away the fact that it was harming Naruto. Naruto however, was able to hide his pain rather well, but it still hurt him. Raukee could see him closing his eyes, taking long breathes, and holding the metal arm guards as tight as he could.

"Why have you entered my chamber without permission, Minashu?" The Jiralhanae gave him a big grin.

"I thought it would be respectable to inform you myself that I'll be taking your place." Rtas actually laughed at him, and Minashu took a step forward. Now Naruto's pain was almost visible. He was gripping the chair hard enough that it drew blood from his palm. His head wound was back, and it was dripping blood down the side of his face again. Minashu pretended not to care or smell it. Human blood was sickening in smell to him. "You laugh. The Prophets are now casting you all aside for failing to protect the hierarch. I just thought I'd let you know personally." With that, he took his leave.

Rtas was quickly on his feet, Naruto doing the same, but throwing the desk at the far corner of the room as the pain he was holding came out. Rtas wasn't shocked by his strength or his actions. Had he been alone he would have done the same. No Jiralhanae would take his place. "I must speak with the Prophets." He told them. Naruto tossed his chair at the desk as he got the last of his anger and pain out of him.

"I'll kill that filthy bastard." Rtas could only hope that some _unfortunate accident _would befall Minashu soon. If Naruto was anything like he knew him as, he'd probably kill him just for wearing the damn crystal. "I'm coming to. I'm going to voice my concern that the Jiralhanae are filthy bastards that are not even worthy enough to wash their feet."

"I will speak, you will stay quiet." Rtas ordered as the small group walked out, Ahielee staying three yards behind them as they all walked. "However, since we have a mission, and I am now in charge of you as Team Leader, I want you to head back to your home, and rest.

If you do not, I shall force you into marking yourself." He hissed. Naruto stared him down for a good minute before leaving to see Xedraelee. Once he was gone, Ahielee and Raukee approached him. "Destroy the crystal. I trust not the Huragok with it either. I will speak with the Prophets. You get ready for your mission. We might be leaving sooner than I had first thought."

10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10

"Oh. Hello! I am 343 Guilty Spark, monitor of Instillation 04, Reclaimer." Hinata could only stare at the basketball sized piece of metal that was trapped in a containment field for "Study". It had one lens, blue in color, and blinked on and off every time it spoke, almost as if it were also trying some sort of mores code or something like that. Despite her lack of shock, she was certainly _shocked_ by the simple fact that, as a robot, it was constantly moving up and down, checking out her naked body, almost as if it were a pervert or something. She didn't feel very safe around the Elites that were guarding her, their blue armor shimmering in the dull light around them, but she felt less safe being around Spark. "Are you cold, Reclaimer? I'm certain that meddlers would give you something warmer to wear if I simply ask them."

"No thanks, I'm fine the way I am." She told him. An Elite nudged her with his plasma rifle, forcing her to remain on task. She had met with the Prophets, something that even they felt disgusted about, and told her that if she didn't talk to the "Oracle" about something called the Great Journey, then she would be tortured in the most brutal of ways. Her mind kept telling her they'd rape her, but her guy told her they get creative and possible try to break her apart.

"Oh. Well, you shouldn't be dressed like that, Reclaimer. My scans indicate that this room is only a mere sixty degrees Fahrenheit. That is unsuitable for your current state of clothing." Hinata calmly looked at the Elite that had nudged her and had a big grin when it looked at the Oracle, then to her, and then back at the Oracle before leaving. "Why are working with these meddlers, Reclaimer? It is because of them that the Flood ran rampant on my instillation. Were it not for them, my instillation might have been saved from the other Reclaimer."

"Yeah, well, you were going to kill a bunch of people in using it." Hinata shifted from foot to foot, clutching the remains of her clothing as she did. Somehow, she just didn't feel safe with the odd little robot, and the simple fact that she was near naked didn't really help at all. She cleared her throat before deciding to cut to the chase. The sooner she got this over, the sooner she could probably rest in peace. "What can you tell me about the Great Journey?"

The little AI blinked its lens' a few times before giving out an audible sigh. "Why are you using such false terminology, just like these meddlers, Reclaimer? The Great Journey is nothing but a containment procedure to keep the Flood imprisoned on my instillation. The Great Journey is nothing but a mistranslation used by the meddlers." The Elites in the corners of the room looked at

each other, and Truth, who stood behind the Oracle, stared intently at Spark as he remained suddenly quiet.

"How can I activate the rings then? Surely you must know a way?"

"Of course I know. My instillation is no different than this one, Reclaimer. In order to activate the Rings, the Index must be retrieved from the Library, a place where we keep all of our history and studies. The instillation will not work without it, and must be used to fire the other Halos. This is what it looks like." He activated a holopad, and brought up the image of the Index. It looked like T, just with a slight curve at the top of it, and pointy tip. "Butâ€¦ this instillation, to my current knowledge, does not need to be activated, for the Flood does not run rampant on it. Why would you want to activate it when there is no real reason to, Reclaimer?" Hinata gave him a shrug of her shoulders as the Elite that had left, came back with a tattered blanket. He tossed it at her, and she grumbled a low curse as she used it to cover her body as best she could with it. "Reclaimer, are you-" Spark's eye turned black, and he dropped to the ground with an echoing clank as the restraints holding him shut off.

"Take her away." Truth ordered hastily. The Sangheili in the room stared at the Oracle as it refused to move, but quickly did as they were asked. Truth watched her leave, pressing a few buttons on his chair before the door split open again. He growled inwardly as Rtas approached him, anger written in his eyes. "Rtas, my most faithful Sangheili, do what do I owe the pleasure of having you in my company?" Truth tried to sound as patient as he could, but his lack of respect for the Sangheili was near reaching its limit, even if their failure had done him a good deed in the end.

"Holy one, this is unacceptable, unprecedented." He motioned to the Jiralhanae that were still fighting over their clothing of the Honor Guard, showing little concern for those that watched them squabble over the uniforms and armor.

"A hierarch is dead, Commander." Truth hissed as Mercy floated into the room. The Oracle was placed back in its containment field. The doors had begun to open again, and Truth cursed inside before noticing that it was the Arbiter, not some other grumbling Sangheili that now hated his new role in life.

"His murderer was within our grasp. If you had not withdrawn our Phantoms-"

"Are you questioning my orders?" Truth hissed, his patience running dry now.

"No, Holy One, I just wish to express my concern that the Jiralhanae-"

"Decommissioning the guards was a radical step. But the Sangheili have made abundantly clear that they can no longer guarantee our safety." Rtas sighed inwardly in defeat. There was no point to argue now. What was done was done. Nothing but time would change their status now. But to have the Jiralhanae above them was beyond dishonorable. Nothing would bring their honor back from such a loss now.

"I shall relay your decision with the High Council." Rtas turned away, Xedrael and Ahriel following close behind him. Rtas gave him a curt nod as he and Thel passed each other. Thel returned it, and watched him leave. Once the doors shut, Truth gave out an audible sigh of frustration as he rubbed his temples.

"Politics," he muttered tiredly. "How tiresome!"

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Hinata was shoved forward with the rifle that Elite was carrying, keeping it pointed into her back to keep her moving. They had been quiet the whole way back, whereas before they had been mumbling curses and offering her choices in death when they took her to the Oracle. But now they were quiet, possible even considering what they had just recently learned. If that was the case, then maybe she could use it to help her escape. It was a long shot, but she was willing to risk it.

She was pushed again, this time into her cell. She felt to the ground, her blanket falling to the ground, and her clothing falling off her body. She wondered if the Elites were perverts as well. She doubted it, but if they were like all men, then she'd probably have to say they were. She slowly stood back up, and walked to the corner of her cell, not really wanting to try her escape plan just yet. As she sat down, two small puffs sounded, and the two Elites dropped to the ground, parts of the faces missing. Hinata quickly jumped back up, unsure of what to do or say. If she screamed for help, she was certain they'd ignore her, and if she just screamed, they'd probably just kill her. She was lucky to even be alive at the moment anyways.

A few seconds later, two Brutes appeared, both hefting two beam rifles, and grinning a bit at the two dead Elites. Both tossed the weapons to the ground, almost looking disgusted with them when they did, and quickly began mocking the two dead Elites once they dropped them on their prone bodies. Hinata stood there, horrified that they had just killed two of their allies, but considering what she heard was going on, she figured that they were actually enemies.

One of them turned to face her, staring at her lustfully before his partner grunted to him for help in moving the bodies. Hinata watched them move the bodies, not exactly caring if they disgraced them by banging them on the cells, leaving a trail of purple blood on the bars and floor as they did. Three Brutes walked in after them, all of them laughing at the sight of her frightened form. As soon as the bodies were moved, and the blood cleaned up by a frightened, and very confused, Grunt, the leader of the three stepped forward, his white fur bristling as he snorted at her.

"Human trash," he spat. He reached for his hammer, but the doors to the chamber of cells opened with a hiss, forcing him to stop. In the light, he could see a small silhouette, and he knew who it was without sniffing around. The figure walked in, and the door shut, revealing Naruto without his mask or chest armor. Instead, he wore his kimono style shirt, which was jet black except for the red fox that was designed onto the back and the kanji for "God of Death" written above it.

"Tartarus," He did everything but show respect for the name

alone.

"Uzumaki Naruto,"

"Uzumakiee," Naruto hissed angrily, stressing the "ee" part with every ounce of hatred he had in him still. He looked over at Hinata, then to the three Jiralhanaes that stood in front of her cell. His eyes narrowed on them. They knew he had a strong sense of smell, but it would do him little good in a prison cell where the prisoners were forced to defecate in their own cells, making them act like the heretics that they were. It only proved to show how low they were. "Where are the two Sangheili that were ordered to watch over her?"

Tartarus snorted to the other two Jiralhanae as he nodded towards him. Naruto watched them draw their weapons, nasty auto grenade launchers with an even nastier blade at the back of it. Naruto gave them a snort, growled something out, causing two Sangheili to appear from thin air. The three stared each other down before Naruto repeated himself to the Jiralhanae Chieftain, causing him to snort again before giving his reply. "They were heretics, and the Prophets ordered their deaths." Naruto blinked, unfazed by the lie. The other two looked worried, and began reaching for the metal bar of their energy swords. Naruto raised a hand, making them stop.

"Is that so?" His eyes cut towards the young woman, and then looked back at the Chieftain. "Tartarus, if you touch her, the council will tear you apart. I have already put in the request to make her my mate when I get back from my mission. She is from my world, and if you touch her, I will rip you apart." Hinata looked nervously at Naruto, then the Brute, and then Naruto again. Tartarus stared Naruto down angrily, his pack tightening their hold on their weapons. "I suggest you leave this area, and let my Sangheili warriors do their job. After all, it is beneath you to do guard duty for humans when the Prophets require extreme protection." Naruto spoke in the highest level of sarcasm he could muster.

Things became intense quickly. The two Jiralhanae looked back at their chieftain, their eyes begging for permission to open fire. The Sangheili held their hands clear of their weapons, showing they weren't ready to fight, though their fingers twitched, a clear sign that they were ready to jump in at a moment's notice. Naruto looked past the two brute shot wielding Jiralhanae, and kept his gaze on the hammer on Tartarus's back.

The door to the chamber opened again, and Thel Vadamee stood in the light. "Tartarus, you have been ordered to--"

"I am well aware, Arbiter." The white Brute growled angrily. He, along with his two pack members, followed him out, the Arbiter following shortly after.

Naruto closed his eyes, holding back his frustration as he did. Only the Jiralhanae could agitate him to this level of anger. He would make sure to break any enemy he came across during his mission so he could work off his anger. When the massive doors snapped shut, he turned around, and in a low voice, whispered out, "Keep an eye on her. She has something I want. When I get back, I'm going to take it, and do what I want with her later," before he walked off. The two Sangheili turned back to her, and then looked at each other, the

other one shrugging before engaging his cloak.

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The moment Naruto stepped onto the Phantom; he ducked his head, and elbowed Rtas, hard in the chest, sending him back a few feet, skidding a few feet back before his massive hands grabbed Naruto by his head, and slammed him into the bulkhead of the ship, denting it in the process. Naruto's blue eye turned blood red, and his cloak activated to two-tailed state. Rtas leveled a glare on him, and Naruto did the same from behind his mask. He was wearing his spare suit of armor. Rtas gripped the bar of his energy sword. Naruto looked ready to kill him before Raukee grabbed Rtas's arm, stopping him before he could do any harm.

"We have not the time for this, Rtas." Raukee pleaded. Rtas knocked him away, and looked back at Naruto.

"I will not have you running off to do as you please, Uzumakiee. I care not what power you have. Make one mistake, and I will cut you down." Rtas tightened his grip on Naruto's neck, and the Jinchuuriki gave out an angry sigh of frustration before noticing something in his eyes. The message was clear. _I will not lose one of my Sangheili on this mission. I have never lost one to date, and I will not lose one now. _He let him go, and Naruto released his powers.

"I understand, Rtas." Naruto told him as he got into one of the many restraints that created by gravity fields. They were created to both keep the person in an upright position while also keeping them completely safe. If the Phantom went down, they had a better chance of surviving because they wouldn't go flying around in the aft of the ship. The restraints had saved Naruto's life once, that being only because the pilot had been killed by when they were trying to get away from a planet that was in the process of being glassed. Not very fun when you had to tell them they destroyed one of their own, and that your ship was now downed.

But Naruto still hated the damn things. They burned away at his skin the last time he had used them, not something he could have forgotten easily. It was a _freak_ accident that had been caused by a tripped set of wires around his part only. Brutes or someone with a grudge against him had obviously tried to kill him, so Naruto had always been a bit edgy around the damn things. But since this was a Drop ship controlled by Rtas and the SpecOps, he had no need to worry about being charred when the ship began to take off.

As the drop ship began to move from the hanger towards the Sacred Ring, Naruto remembered their mission. With Humans being on the ground, it was decided that they would lead an attack against them, hopefully stopping whatever they were planning. Truth seemed to believe that they knew about the Icon, and was determined to have them stop them. Thel had gone on ahead to take down a barrier that circled something called the Library.

Truth. Naruto never liked him. In fact, he never liked Mercy or Regret. The only people he trusted were the Sangheili, the people who helped raise him, and the only reason he trusted the Lekgolo was because no one could understand them. Lekgolo could read war poetry one minute and then be in a mindless blood rage where they killed anything that dared to move. When Regret had been killed, Naruto felt

somewhat happy by his death, minus the way things ended up in the end. Mercy, he could stand, Truth, not so much.

The ship jerked a bit, and Naruto groaned as he watched Rtas walk through the aft of the ship, inspecting his Sangheili, watching as a few checked their weapons over, and others meditated. Naruto and Rtas had an odd relationship. Rtas cared not for his power, and viewed him as a human at times, but those had been few and far between. Naruto viewed Rtas as a friend in some form of way. Rtas had been forced into killing most of friends in the past to get his position, because almost all of them had become heretics. When Naruto had learned this, he tried to be his friend, but that had ended badly. After a while, the two became friends, if the word could even describe their real relationship. But Rtas did care about their lives, his included, and he did do everything in his power to make sure they all came home.

Naruto closed his eyes and waited for the drop ship to get to its destination. He could only hope that Thel knew what the hell he was doing, and that Xedrael and Sore could protect the girl.

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Sasuke stared at the three new marines with a brow raised. One had short, formerly long, blond hair, and a shotgun and extra grenades on his form. He had the name Deidara stenciled into the helmet he wore. He carried a pistol on his side, but he kept more ammo for the shotgun and grenades. Beside him was a man with slicked back silver hair, a bored expression on his face, an assault rifle on his back, and a pair of SMGs on his sides. He had the name Hidan stenciled into the side of his helmet that was under his arm. In the back was a young man with a clean shaven head, a battle rifle on his back, and the name Dosu stenciled into his helmet. They were just a few of the survivors that had agreed to help out and pass all tests the quickest. Madara was leaning up against his seat, wearing charcoal fatigues, his name stenciled into a helmet as well, a battle rifle on his back, and a red crystal wrapped around his neck. All marines and navy personal for In Amber Clad was to wear one of the crystals just in case the Kyuubi showed back up.

But still, they were fresh, had no idea on what exactly was going on, and they all looked eager to fight. Team Silver would finish training the others that wanted to fight while Team Fire Dragon would help assist Keys, Johnson, and a squad of marines in finding the Index. They had already located it, now they just need to get inside, power down the damn thing, and take out anything that got in their way.

Sasuke took a calming breath, pushing down the hope that his parents were alive. He had been orphaned by the attack, to his knowledge anyways, and had personally witness the death of Itachi, his older brother at the hands of a Brute. He had always hoped that his parents were alive, and if Sarutobi Hiruzen was alive, then maybe his parents were alive. I mean, one could only hope, right?

"Sasuke," Sasuke shook his head, looking up at Madara as he approached him, his new clothing annoying him as he walked. Moving from rags to full dress marine gear was a pain to all of them; none more so than Madara who was wearing a pair of pants that were a size too small for him. His crystal necklace was barely visible from under

his armor, and it produced a red hue that reflected from his faceplate. "What thoughts occupy your mind?"

Sasuke shook his head, and looked at the back of the pelican they were in. In the other Pelican behind them were the others that came along. Keys and Johnson were in the third one, and had another odd fellow named Zaku, who got his hair cut in a buzzed style, a girl named Kin, both deciding to use battle rifles, and scoring fairly well with them. Two more rode with them, a young woman named Konan and a young woman named Matsuuri, both scoring high points with their battle rifles, and eventually earning sniper rifles. They had a knack for it. The second pelican carried the squad of marines.

"I'm just worried about the new marines, nothing more." He lied. He could have cared less for them. To him, they were just potential enemies in the long run. In his line of work, and with what the original Spartans had been trained for, today's friend was tomorrow's enemy. The original Spartans had been trained only to fight the Insurrectionists that had been causing the UNSC a bad time. They had been trained to fight the Covenant, but that didn't exactly stop Ackerson from using a few personal squads to take down Insurrectionist bases. So he just didn't trust them.

"You're lying." Madara moved forward. Despite his age, he moved like a man of thirty. He showed every inch of his age without that god awful mask he wore. Sasuke cursed in his helmet. "If you do not wish to speak your thoughts it's okay with me. My only concern is the survivors that we have saved from our lands, nothing more." He turned back to look at Dosu as he slid his helmet on. "Dosu, are you okay?"

"I'm fine." He whispered. His body had been burned badly during the attack on his home village, and left him scared by it. His scars had caused him to be an outcast among all of the survivors, namely because they deformed him a bit. His one good eye was sensitive to bright colors, but other than that, he was okay. He learned to accept everything about himself, and the hateful eyes that some gave him.

Konohamaru sat up, stretching, and Haku and Yugito did the same, sensing that their break was over. He pulled out a box, removed the lid and straw inside it, revealing a new battle rifle. He pulled it apart, cleaned it, and then put it back together. He made tiny adjustments to his scope, stunning a Madara and Deidara a bit at how precious he was about things. Next, he pulled out a few "egg containers" and checked over his grenades. He placed them in his satchels from fragmental to concussion.

Haku pulled checked over his sniper rifle, making sure the thing was well cleaned for the third time, and that it was calibrated to his liking. He was just as paranoid about his accuracy as Konohamaru, the only difference being that his was set for long range, while Konohamaru's wasn't set for his type of long range. He made tiny adjustments to his oracle scope before checking over the ammo. Once the ammo was inspected, he put the four rounds into the magazines, and began checking over his ammo for his battle rifle.

Yugito was counting all of her ammo for her duel SMGs. Yugito had developed a nasty habit of being ammo paranoid after a simple field test where she didn't have enough ammo to complete the assignment.

After that little moment, she carried as much ammo as she possible could. When she ran out, she grabbed whatever was close by, and used it. As she finished counting her ammo, she made sure that the right amount was in each magazine. Once she was done, she placed each clip into her ammo belt, and walked to the ramp as it lowered.

Sasuke checked his ammo with a sense of satisfaction as he pulled his battle rifle off his back. He switched the safety off, and motioned for the fresh marines to fall in behind his team. Madara pulled his rifle off his back as well, and followed the team out, the others quickly doing the same. The other two pelicans dropped off their load, gained some altitude, turned around, and faced Miranda, giving her a swift nod before heading back to In Amber Clad.

Miranda looked around, as did the others, and stared at the structure. The metal was warped, burned, dented in, and in other places, none existent anymore. Scrap metal from weapons, Sentinels, and other parts of the structure lined the ground, some burned, others still burning. Johnson handed her a pair of SMGs before motioning for the teams to press forward. Sasuke nodded to his team, and they went invisible, blending in with the terrain almost instantly.

The rookies were surprised while the other marines just shook their heads at them. "Show offs," McKenzie muttered dryly. Madara gave him a hard and annoyed look as his team pressed forward, following Johnson as he kicked his squad into gear. Johnson wasn't going to be shown up by some young Spartans. If he was going to be shown up by anyone, it would be Master Chief, not some jumpy kids ready to show their stuff.

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Xedraelee and Sore sighed mentally as they continued to watch over the young Hyuuga. They were bored, but orders were orders. Naruto had been most persistent in his demands that they watch over her. Xedraelee needed no more words other than to know that his "son" wanted her watched over, even protected if need be. Sore had been stubborn about it, but a quick flash of his holy powers had him quickly claiming that he would love to watch over her.

So here they were, watching over a young girl from the shadows of the far back corner, cloaked, hungry, thirsty, and very bored. Xedraelee knew the Jiralhanae were up to something. He saw that look of fear when Naruto mentioned that the girl was from his world. That made him wonder why they were be slightly afraid. If the Jiralhanae had something to hide, they usually were easy to frighten when something was revealed, like something they did. Tartarus killing his uncle was one of them, but they all accepted it. There was also the time when it was revealed that they started the war had been another, but he wasn't afraid of that one either. But the way he acted around the girl made him believe that he did have something to hide.

Xedrael took in a deep breath, and began to concentrate on the facts he knew already. Naruto's world had been destroyed nearly two days after he was brought before the Covenant. No Sangheili ever admitted to this desecration, and if they had, they had certainly done a good job in hiding it from those that had great faith towards the boy. The Unggoy... well he wouldn't put it past them, but for them to take control of a UNSC ship, something that had done the deed, he highly

doubted it. The Kig-Yar might have done, considering all the things they could do anyways, but he highly doubted that as well. Yamane he doubted as well. Though they could work one if given the right about of time, he doubted that they could even pull it off. The Lekgolo was just laughable. So that only left the Jiralhanae.

It could have been them, seeing as they had been the only race to deliberately _shoot _them in the back so to speak. When Thel had done his first holy mission for the Prophets, he had a Jiralhanae chieftain with him in another ship to watch over him. They destroyed his ship so they could go report the find. Though the chieftain was killed, it was just one of the many stains that the Jiralhanae had come to put on their tarnished records with them. If anyone did it, it would have been the Jiralhanae. But what would they gain out of it?

The doors opened up, and eight Jiralhanae stood at the entrance, sniffing as they walked in carefully. The one in front was a young one, probably too young to earn the "us" suffix. They approached Hinata's cell, the small one grinning as he pulled his spike rifle from his belt. Hinata stared at it he raised it to her face from behind the cell. The metal bars parted, and he entered the cell. When he squeezed the trigger, his hand was cut off, and the round hit him in the foot before the energy sword was drove through his throat. The other Jiralhanae roared angrily as Sore became visible.

Two more Jiralhanae entered the prison chamber, raised their spike rifles, and were killed before they could fire off a single round. Their headless bodies hit the ground, spraying dark blood onto the blood stained floors. Xedrael appeared; his energy sword crackling as he glared at the other five Jiralhanae that lifted up their brute shots. They fired. Xedraelee ducked under the auto grenades, raised his plasma rifle, and swept low, taking out their legs at the knee, making them howl in pain before Sore gave them a dead check.

With the mini battle over, Xedraelee turned to face the young woman, staring at her with sad eyes. She was from his world. There was no mistake now. The Jiralhanae were responsible for the death of Naruto's world, and they would soon pay for their crimes.

Walking into her cell, she jumped up, backing against the far wall with wide eyes. Xedraelee offered a hand, and she stared at him, shock evident on her face. He stood there, waiting for her to take his hand before a loud howl sounded from above them. The Jiralhanae knew what they had done. He had to move, and he had to do it now. He took her hand, and dragged her out of the cell, forcing her to follow him as Sore brought up the rear.

"Where are we going?" Sore asked. Xedraelee thought about it for a moment before taking a left out the back of the chamber, and straight into the back alleys of High Charity's housing area.

"We're heading to my home. I have weapons and armor there that we can use against them." Sore might have been grinning at the moment. He wasn't sure, and to be frank, he didn't really care.

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Rtas lead his squad through the chambers of the wall that surrounded a once massive structure in the center of it. The chambers, tunnels,

and wide open areas looked reverse. What should have been support beams or railing for the ceiling of the walkways were on the ground, supporting nothing, but being a constant obstacle for them to traverse. The ceiling had very little supporting beams or railings to it, and it was rather impressive to know that a possible ten thousand year old structure was still standing because of this. Obviously the Forerunners knew what they were doing when they had built the place.

As they walked through the foggy pathways, dodging crates, metal squares that were welded to the ground, busted doors, and small little robots that flew around without paying them any mind, a small tickling sensation went through Naruto's spine. He played it off as nothing, but as they began to go deeper into the wall, the green fog became thicker, and the tingling sensation began to worsen. He felt sick to his stomach, and his body hurt. Taking each step was a pain to him.

He suddenly came to a stop, unable to bear the pain, and collapsed to one knee, his cloaked form shimmering until it was broken, revealing him to the world. He hit the ground with a loud thud as he began screaming in pain. The team was alerted, spun around, took cover, and waited. An Unggoy that they had found stuck its head out, and got it removed from a short three-round burst. Rtas growled inwardly. Humans were here, and they had taken out Naruto with the crystals again.

He nodded to his team, gave them a few hand signs, and then ran over to where the Jinchuuriki lay, his body motionless and no longer screaming. His first thought was that he was dead. But that thought was quickly put aside when he saw a human drop down on him, forcing him to laugh. Before anyone knew what happened, Naruto held him by his head, standing on his own two feet, and reaching for his plasma rifle. "Monster!" A Marine shouted as it appeared from the fog like a ghost.

"That's me!" He spoke in a voice not his own as he fired his rifle at point blank into the face of the marine, killing him instantly.

"Dosu!" A female yelled in anger. "Damn you!" Gunfire erupted around Naruto as he laughed like a mad man. When the rounds began to sputter against his shields, he took cover, turned around, jumped over the cover, and fired his rifle at the people returning fire. A grenade landed down at his feet, and he jumped while forming three-tails, protecting him from the blast and sending him back into a pile of stacked up crates. They fell down on him as he hit them, and then all was still for a moment. The metal floor bulged as something went through it towards the young woman. At the last second, a male shoved her out of the way with a cry of "Kin" before a red transparent hand grabbed him out of the air, and crushed him. "Zaku?!" The hand rushed towards her, grabbed her, and then dragged her through the torn up metal hole it had made, killing her in a painful manner.

Rtas stared at the scene with wide eyes. This wasn't Naruto or at least not the Naruto he had known. Had he always been like this when he fought? Why had the crystals suddenly not taken effect on his body?

Naruto laughed manically as more soldiers appeared to try and stop them.

"I'm sorry, human, but you know what? I DON'T WANNA DIE JUST YET!" It wasn't Naruto, it was the Kyuubi. The crystals had released him, or his mind had simply fused with Naruto's to create him. "Things are gonna be different from now on!" He laughed as he began firing at the hidden humans. Rtas motioned for his team to pull back. He had heard the stories that Naruto told him about the demon that attacked his home world. It was a frightening tale, and he'd rather not know how their strengths equaled against his own.

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Miranda watched in horror and fright at the Kyuubi's destructive power. How could the Covenant get their hands on someone like him? Why was he even fighting for them? Could he even be stopped now? Most importantly, why weren't the crystals working? Had he grown immune to them? But that wasn't possible with only a few exposures, was it? As Dosu was shot in the face, Zaku crushed, and Kin torn apart by razor sharp pieces of metal, it became clear that he wasn't going to back down, and that he wasn't even in the happiest of moods.

"Take him out!" Johnson shouted as he began firing again. Deidara opened fire with his pistol, favoring the range over the power of the shotgun. The Kyuubi somehow managed to dodge all of the shots, never once being hit. He had to be seeing them, but that was near impossible. No one could track a bullet unless they had high-speed camera. But he was doing it.

Sasuke lunged forward, running as fast as he could as he returned fire. Kyuubi dropped his weapon, reached for the bar of energy sword, and was hit from behind. "Go! Leave him to us!" Madara shouted as Yugito pounced down on his prone form. Miranda opened her mouth to say something, but Sasuke and Johnson pushed her back, returning fire to keep the few Elites they saw down. She knew they had to get the Index, but at what costs? She growled in anger before turning around to follow the others, leaving Madara and Yugito to deal with the Kyuubi.

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Xedraelee shoved Hinata aside, pulled out his rifle, and killed the two Jackals that came rushing towards them. They were at his home, and it wasn't much to her. It was somewhat cozy by their standards maybe, but to her, it wasn't much to look at. But then again, they were getting attacked, and she was taking cover in a hallway away from the fighting with a few scared Grunts that had been told to guard her with their lives if they wanted to live to breathe another morning mist cycle of pure methane. So far they had done a pretty good job of protecting her. Only three out of ten had died. She was slightly worried about having them protect her, but they seemed determined to just breathe a cycle of pure untainted methane.

Xedraelee took cover from three Brutes wielding brute shots. The rounds tore up the inside of his home, the kitchen mostly, and he cursed inwardly. He never liked it and had always been planning to remodel it. Who knew that he would finally be motivated when it was destroyed while he protected a female from Naruto's world? Irony was one word that Ahielee might have used had he known. Raukee might have just laughed.

He spun around once all six rounds from the three were wasted, took aim, and fired at their heads. Their armor, though sturdy, could only take a few well placed shots from a plasma rifle before failing, and melting them like butter. They dropped, and eight more appeared from behind their cover of uprooted metal slabs that made up the walkways. They seemed quiet determined to kill them and the girl. She must be from his world, and she must know what happened, which meant that the Brutes really were responsible. This would be a fun fight when he began thinking about it. If the other Sangheili could learn of this, then they would have a reason to kill the Brutes for all the things they had done to them.

A crystal round punched through the weakened metal walls, and he stared at it with narrowed eyes. He spun around, and fired at the two charging Brutes that were determined to get in the house. They dropped quickly, and a highly concentrated plasma beam tore through the side of the door frame just above his head. He ducked back into cover, cursing his luck. The Jackals were also determined to kill him. How many enemies did he have in the Covenant?

An explosion from the roof made him curse inwardly. _They're getting smart? _He would have laughed if he had the time. He ran towards Hinata, passing Sore's dead body as he did, and grabbed her by the arm again to drag her off. Hinata had a hard time keeping up with him, and going down a flight of stairs while being dragged was rather hard. As soon as they got to the bottom, Hinata could only stare at the weapon cache he had. Human weapon, armor both Covenant and Human, Covenant weapons, spare food and water, and a large bolted room with a massive set of combination locks on them. Had he collected them, or had someone else?

Xedraelee pulled her to the massive door and opened it. Inside was an odd suit of armor, but the lights had gone out before she could look at it fully. He shoved her inside, and seemed to smile as he shut the door. By the time she was to her feet, the door was shut, and she was locked inside. The air began to get cooler, and she shivered before a light came on. She found a thick blanket, and pulled it over her body, knocking something over when she did. She looked at it, and her eyes narrowed in confusion. Explosions sounded from outside, and she could hear someone talking angrily with someone. The words were too muffled for her to understand what was going on, so she got into the back of the metal room she was in, and huddled down in fear, keeping the thick blanket tightly wrapped around her now naked form.

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Naruto continued to laugh like a mad man as he fought with Madara and Yugito. Both were proving to be a hell of a tough opponent together. Madara could read his moves with ease, while Yugito was constantly forcing him back with SMG fire and transparent arms that flew into his own, stopping his, and keeping Madara safe until he could finish whatever it was that he was doing. He told her that he needed time to do something, but he didn't tell her what it was; only that it would stop him. That was enough for her, and she was quick to go on the offensive.

Naruto kicked her in the head, shattering her mask, leaving her with a deep gash on the side of her head as she slammed up against the

metal wall, denting it in. She slumped to the ground, punched the metal floor, and threw a transparent arm at him. It slammed into his body, and threw him back. He was thrown into a small metal crate the damaged his armor, and tore his mask off. Crimson red hair blocked his field of vision for his left eye, but right eye was solid red. No ounce of white was left to it.

"You two bastards really suck at this." He growled as he ran at her. Madara continued to chant as his hands flipped through an odd style of motions and signs. He was trying to concentrate, but it was hard for him with all the commotion the two were making.

Yugito slammed a fist into his chest, destroying part of his chest plate, and got a knee to the chest for her actions. Naruto spun flipped backwards in the air, and kicked her in the jaw, sending her flipping backwards onto the ground. She hit the ground, placed a hand out in front of her, and spun around with a leg swipe, taking out his legs, forcing him onto his back. She jumped on top of him, and held him down as best she could. His three-tails waved around angrily before grabbing hold of her by her shoulders, and slinging her away. She gripped his chest plate as hard as she could before he threw her, and she yanked it off, revealing his glowing blue crystal. Instantly, Madara was on the ground, screaming in pain as the crystal began to brighten up.

"Hm, what's this?" Naruto sounded amused before a chunk of metal hit him in the side, sending him flying through crates, a few Sentinels that just went with the blow, and straight into a wall. His body slumped to the ground, but he got up, raised his energy sword, crackling as it came to life, and lunged at Yugito as she ran at him as fast as she could. They met halfway. He tackled her to the ground, raised the energy sword to deliver the killing blow, and an explosion sent them hurtling out a make shift window that revealed a dark pit below.

Naruto fell through the air, twisting and turning until he was set so his feet would touch first. Yugito did the same, and the two came down hard. Naruto used his right hand to help stop his rapid momentum by stabbing his energy katana into the chunks of metal to help him stop. Madara stood up, the pain no longer affecting him. Yugito did the same, but crotched down on all fours to help her stop. When she came to a near stop, she rushed to him, and tackled him into a slab of metal. It dented in, and she punched him in the stomach. Naruto laughed as he doubled over, head butting her in the face, sending her reeling back before kicking her in the stomach to sending her flying backwards. Naruto continued to laugh as plasma bolts sizzled near his body. He turned to find Thel, Rtas, Raul, and Ahriel as they took aim at him. Yugito punched him in the face, getting his attention.

"Damn you to hell, woman!" A tracer round zipped past his head, forcing him to look up at Madara as he gripped his sniper rifle as tightly as he could. Madara was in the middle of reloading when a shadow appeared behind him. Naruto grinned as he tore the crystal from his neck and threw it at him. Madara got hit in the side, and went down screaming as more shadows began to appear. With the current threat neutralized, Naruto went back to fighting with Yugito.

Hinata listened to the fighting that was going outside with fear in her eyes. When she pulled the blanket closer to her body, she heard something slam up against the metal door. Her first thought was that they were trying to get into the place, but that was quickly put aside when the banging stopped and was replaced by another explosion, this one sounding just a bit further away. Then all was quiet. Hinata stared at the door, trying to understand what was going on. A hiss of gasses soon sounded, followed by a loud cry of pain. After that, it was quiet again.

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Naruto punched Yugito in the face, sending her on her back. He quickly jumped on top of her, drawing his energy sword with a psychotic grin, and prepared to stab her in the chest. Yugito howled in pain as blood poured from her mouth. Naruto thrust the blade towards her, and froze with it just inches away from her chest. He was trying hard to stab her, but his body wouldn't move. _"You're demon friend will perish soon enough."_ Naruto's head jerked up, his eyes focusing on something in the distance. Seven Jiralhanae stood around in an armory room that he quickly recognized.

Yugito punched him in the chest, getting him off of her, and then made a break for the cover of the structure. "This is Spartan G-207, requesting immediate pickup! My coordinates areâ€|" An explosion stuck the ground behind her, and she was sent head over heels into a structure. A green mass of flesh was in front of her, tentacle like arms, an SMG in one hand, and a metal stick in the other. It was a human turned Flood. She raised her SMG, only to find she didn't have one. A plasma bolt melted it, and she looked over to find Madara with a plasma rifle. His side was bleeding badly.

"Come on! We need to get away from the demons!" He grabbed her hand, and began running through the foggy corridors. "I know a place that we might be safe for the time being! I need to rest! Whatever Kyuubi did to me hurt my chakra network!" She didn't understand what he was talking about, and for the time being, really didn't care. So long as they could get to safety, she'd be happy as anyone could be.

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Thel approached him, holding his rifle up, ready to shot him he went berserk again. When he got up to him, he rolled Naruto over, and saw his tears. Something was wrong with him. His eyes were glazed over like he was dead, but he was breathing erratically. He seemed to be looking through him towards something. Rtas and the other Sangheili approached him, unsure of what to make of the situation. _"Naruto is no demon. He is a proud Sangheili warrior. I curse only his human body for its form. At his current strength, he is everything but a demon. He isâ€| he isâ€| _my son._" _Naruto felt a stab in his heart as something passed through it. He blinked, and found Thel standing over him, his eyes blinking.

"He's gone." Darkness took him.

A Phantom appeared overhead, and Rtas motioned for the new Sangheili warriors to take Naruto back to High Charity as Thel approached him again. As the Phantom flew away, Thel explained that he had come to retrieve the sacred Icon that was critical for the Great Journey. The

Sangheili around him all nodded approvingly. Rtas felt power flow through him. The Great Journey was close. He would live long enough to see it indeed. "We shall cut into the heart of this infestation. Retrieve the Icon. And burn any Flood that stands in our way." A collection of roars from the Sangheili all signaled that they were ready to fight. "The Flood is not to be trifled with. I hope you know what you're doing." Thel nodded while taking a deep breath.

11. Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Naruto opened his eyes, and growled as he swatted a worried Unggoy away. It groveled in fear before scurrying away. _Idiotic weaklings, _he thought as he felt his chest. He was certain he had been shot just a few hours ago, but Thel had not been holding the weapon that would have caused his pain. His pain felt like a piercing round, like a crystal that would heat up and then cool rapidly before breaking apart. Thel was holding a plasma rifle. Although it confused him, the more confusing part was the sudden appearance of Jiralhanae that had appeared. Why had he seen them? What were they doing? And why did they all have big grins on their faces. Most importantly: why were they in his armory room in his old home?

He tossed the bed sheets aside, standing up on the warm metal floors of a hospital with Sangheili doctors and Huragok tending wounded warriors, most of which were trying to escape, some screaming that the doctors were heretics. The doctors that were accused of this were left alone, only because they understood that their Sangheili brothers were only trying to get away from them and their medical weapons.

Naruto threw on his kimono shirt and walked out of the hospital, running into a few frightened Unggoy that held small tablets or old fashioned books to one another. When Naruto walked by them, he noticed one of them were pointing at words in the book, showing him that it was a dictionary. "That no look like word he spoke." One of them said flatly. If he had been talking in his sleep again, he figured that the effects of the crystals had still been plaguing him, meaning he had been talking with Kyuubi again and they could hear it. He wondered why, when they talked he spoke in a different language, but he really didn't care. It hadn't been the first time he spoke to him in his sleep, and it most certainly wouldn't be the last.

He shoved a Jiralhanae out his way when it stopped in front of him, trying to be as apposing at it could. When it turned to give him an angry shout, Naruto was already gone.

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Yugito cursed her luck. Why had she been the one to stay behind with Madara? Why couldn't she just leave him to deal with the Kyuubi? It wouldn't have been that hard for her to just leave him. But she had been trained to never leave a man behind, so she had stayed. The only reason she cursed her luck now was because of their current condition. Madara was dead, replaced by Tobi who had fallen asleep halfway into the hike up a mountain that overlooked the massive library. It was inside the wall, meaning the place looked like something from a horror movie. Twisted metal covered the landscape.

Trees were rooting away, some breaking when the faintest of winds struck them. There was no grass, and the only areas that had grass had black grass. It was truly a sight into the reality of hell, or what hell might look like.

Still, she hiked up the sloop, using hand to help her balance, and the other to keep Tobi on her back. Even as she did this, she kept her eyes and ears opened, searching for a target that lay in wait for her. During a routine training excursion, she had been shot fifty times by one of the damn Machine Gun turrets that shot only blanks while she climbed up a mounting to ring a bell with her team. She had been peppered. Kiri had been peppered. Fu, the seven-tailed Jinchuuriki, had been peppered. Gaara had gotten away clean, as usual. So while they took the hits, his sand protected him long enough to get up and ring the damn bell. She had hurt for three days because of it. So she didn't want to get caught like that again.

She gripped the top of a rock ledge, pulled her head to look around, finding only darkness, and then tossed Tobi up first before she jumped up. She quickly grabbed her SMGs, and looked around before putting one up and slinging Tobi on her shoulder. No way was she going to leave his ass here in the middle of nowhere so he could be eaten by the Flood or worse. She sprinted through the dark tunnel, not daring to turn her lights on as she did a quick recon check. She came to a stop at a corner where a faint light was emitted from the other side.

Tobi began to stir, and she set him down. He gripped his head, opened his mouth, and she slammed a hand over it to keep him quiet. He gave her a hard look before getting her hand off of his mouth. He knew what she was trying to tell him. _Keep quiet. I don't know what's on the other side. _

Tobi however, knew what was on the other side of the corner. Peering around it, he found a small fire slowly burning, huts constructed around it. "Come, follow Tobi. Tobi know this place." Yugito resisted the urge to just shoot him. There had been other Spartan III's during training that had talked in third person. It aggravated her to no end. He was killed on their first mission. She missed him now. He would have gotten along with Tobi.

Tobi walked into the tunnel and Yugito cursed as she found all eyes on her. Some picked up katanas, kunai, stones, while others picked up bow and arrows. She wondered how they would fare against her armor. Tobi looked up, causing her to look up, and she gasped at it. They were inside the mountain, just like she thought they had been. A large hole was in the top of it, letting in the moonlight from the distant moon she had spotted during the climb. Tobi motioned for her to follow, and she did. The people, all wearing rags for clothing, gave her a wide berth as she walked behind Tobi. Little kids pointed at her. Adults watched her walk by with blinking eyes. She had obviously been the first person they'd seen in a while.

Tobi came to a stop and grinned. Yugito looked over and found a city beneath them. It was at least a half a kilometer drop, maybe a little more. She wasn't too sure, but the city was nothing but a mass of tents, huts, small wooden buildings, a multilayer system of farms, and a few pounds. It was really impressive actually, but after seeing Earth's cities, they really couldn't compare. Maybe she had just become a city girl after just one quick look, or maybe she had

forgotten what it was like to live in a small rundown temple that only had the barest of things for her to live on.

Tobi began walking towards a small flight of stairs that lead down towards the city below. She couldn't take her eyes off of it. It was really amazing to just see something like this created this close to the library. She had wondered why Madara knew the way, but she didn't think that they had created a thriving city down here. Tobi came to a stop at a guard post with two people standing by the small hut. Both had katanas on their backs, and both wore rags that covered barely anything. One was a young woman who hardly looked out of her thirties, and the other was a young man that had a small scar along his left eye. He was blind in that eye.

"Mikoto, Yahiko, it's good to see you again. How are you?" They looked at each other, sighed, and then looked past him. He caught it. "She's friendly. Tobi likes her." They looked her over before eyeing the odd weapons she carried. They had never seen anything like it, and Tobi was carrying a different one, but still just as odd looking. Tobi fidgeted a bit under their gaze for some reason, but soon was let through. Mikoto watched her walk away, her eyes narrowed in confusion.

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Thel sighed in defeat as he punched the controls to the barge that would lead him to the library. Rtas had been rather angry when he asked him about leaving a few of his warriors to aid him, but he eventually let him take three. Ahiel, carrying dual Needlers, Raul, carrying dual plasma rifles, and Vore, carrying a single plasma rifle, were the Sangheili warriors he got, as it was all he could truly spare. He hated that he had to drag them along with him, but he needed help in getting the Icon.

Tartarus's ship appeared behind him; hovering just a bit behind them. _"I see that coward didn't join you."_ Thel held his tongue as he fought to keep from yelling at him. Rtas would have been outraged to have heard him say that. Rtas could put him in his place if he wanted to, and do it without using a weapon. _"I'll try to keep the Flood off your back as best I can."_ He lied. Thel watched his ship lower down to their level, keeping their weapons aimed more towards the ground. Yeah, he was going to help them by targeting the floor where the enemy wasn't hiding out at. If they wanted to board, they'd just jump from the ceiling, or fall from it, whichever they wanted to call it, and land on the barge.

Raukee checked his grenade count before shaking his head. "I don't have many grenades." He told them. Ahielee checked his, he had a few extra, but he had always been a bit grenade happy. Vore looked his over as well. He had enough to get by so long as they didn't get so overrun that they had no chance of survival. When Thel looked his over, he sighed. He had no grenades. He didn't feel like asking for any.

Flood spores and infection forms dropped from the ceiling, just like Thel had figured this would happen. He pulled out his energy sword, gave them a loud roar before charging in.

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Anders sighed as she shrugged the arm on her shoulder off again. It was hard to concentrate with his arm on her shoulder. She didn't have anything against him, but he was just creepy. Something about his eyes made her feel uneasy. She felt as though he was looking straight through her for some reason. Looking over her shoulder, she spied his golden eyes with tiny slits in them, like snake eyes. Shiny black hair that was slicked back, even though he hadn't combed or cleaned it in years probably. He wore green olive for the moment. He, along with a few others, had opted to not join their ranks of soldiers, believing that once they were back home, they'd be okay and away from the war.

He gave her a strange smile, and she went back to work. He was just creepy, plain and simple. Orochimaru was just creepy.

"What are you working on?" Orochimaru looked over his shoulder, spying a shy glance at Neji, his SPI armor making him seem taller than what he really was. He looked just like a Greek God of War or something. With his helmet off, it was easy to see his oddly cut hair that looked like bear claws, odd tattoo on the center of his head, and lavender eyes that had no pupil. He ran a gauntlet hand over his scalp, scratching at a sudden itchy spot as he glanced at the computer that Anders was working at. She was thankful he showed up.

She twisted in her chair to face him, a grin plastered on her face. "Well, I think I figured out what the crystals do to Kyuubi." She answered matter-of-factly. Sarutobi tensed upon hearing the mention of Kyuubi. He gripped his crystal cane a bit tighter, but said nothing as Anders continued. "The crystals give off the same energy as the kind he emits, which is something I discussed earlier when I suggested you all wear the crystals. They don't cause any physical pain with his body like I first thought however. The pain he feels is expressed more towards a mental instability."

"That would explain why the last time he just went nuts." Neji muttered beneath his breath. "But what I wanna know is; are there any other side effects? I just got a message from Sasuke saying that Kyuubi appeared, went down, and then got back up acting totally different. He seemed to show higher regards for surviving, quicker reflexes, and heightened senses. Can you explain that?" She sighed and shook her head. Neji sighed as well.

"If I had more data on the crystals, the Kyuubi, and the effects it has on him, then I might be able to tell you how he would react to it, future reactions included. But with only a limited pool of facts, we have no way of knowing what will happen." Orochimaru looked between the two, confusion evident on his face. Neji turned to walk away, and Anders went back to working when he decided to speak up. He coughed into his hand to get their attention. Anders turned her head only to face him. "Is there something you'd like to add?"

Orochimaru might have been a heartless bastard, but he wasn't a stupid heartless bastard. If he knew he was going to die, he left quickly. Given the people he was surrounded by, it was clear that they weren't in a running mood. "Do you have a photo of him? He might be someone we know." Anders eyed him for a moment before pulling up the last image they had of him. Sarutobi and Orochimaru both glanced at it. Three whisker marks on each cheek, blond hair with miner taints of red at the tips, and blue eyes, or a single blue eye

actually. "Yep, he's the Kyuubi Jinchuuriki, Uzumaki Naruto, or should I say, Namikaze Naruto, the heir to the Namikaze estate?" Sarutobi sighed. There was no estate left. It had been destroyed when the attackers came to their land.

"So his name is Naruto." Anders muttered. "We had guessed that his name was that when we were told about the nine Bijuu, and sworn testimonies from several adult survivors that said he was a Jinchuuriki. But we had no idea that he had joined their ranks until a year ago when he began appearing more and more. This doesn't help me understand his weakness towards the crystals, or what they do to him, but it does give us a solid name for him other than Kyuubi." She began typing again, pulling up all the data on the nine Bijuu that they had.

Survivors from all of the lands had been gracious enough to give them information on all of the bijuu that they knew about, which happened to be all nine, including their Jinchuuriki. Ackerson made a first grab at them, got them, and lured them into his little army of Spartans for fighting his battles. From what she had on her computer on all of them, Kyuubi was the strongest, possessing nine-tails, had the power to swing just a single tail to raise mountains or crush them and summon tsunamis. He was a force to be reckoned with. She hastily brought up the images that had been taken from his first appearance to his latest appearance that she had on record. Numbers, words, graphs, charts, and other mathematics scrolled across the laptop as she hastily typed. It sounded like machine-gun fire to be honest, and Neji stared at intently. She came to a sudden stop, her eyes narrowing in confusion. Why hadn't she seen this sooner?

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Hinata scanned over the suit in front of. After satisfying her hunger with ration bars she found in the back of the metal chamber she was, which she concluded as a bomb shelter or safe house, she began looking over everything in the damn place for something to use to help her get out, get dressed, and possible, radio for help. However, all she found was clothing nearly fourteen sizes too small, a portable radio that had to have been UNSC equipment with a range of only a few meters, ten to fifteen at tops, supposing the door didn't stop radio waves. She also found a laptop, year model 2552. She had tried to get it to work, but it required a password that she couldn't crack. Anders could do it, she had no doubt about that, but the password was probably in Covenant language. She soon gave up on the computer, and put it beside a box where she had found more blankets before remembering the odd looking suit.

The suit was really odd looking. It had the characteristics of the standard Elite armor, but also combined the thick armor of the Hunters. The head had two eye holes that were currently jet black, like the rest of the armor, three fin-like pieces of metal on the side and top of its head. The armor was small, probably no bigger than her tiny form, and was solid black. It had gauntlets, claws for fingers, and tiny holes between each knuckle. The boots had two claws to it for toes, and both had tiny holes in them as well. On its back were two metal rods that were connected into an upside down V, almost looking like wings to her or the bone structure for it anyways.

There was a hiss of gas from behind her, the sound of metal grinding against metal, and deadbolts unlocking. She whipped around, watching as the door slowly opened up. She stared at the figure in the door frame. Two Brutes stood in the door, big grins on their faces as one of them brought its nasty looking brute shot to bear. A red transparent hand grabbed the one holding the gun; another grabbed the other, and pulled them away.

Hinata stared at the empty space for a fraction of a second before turning around to find a hiding place. She stopped when a red transparent hand grabbed her, spun her around, and pulled her to the teenager with blond hair and red tips. He looked deep into her eyes, searching for an answer of some kind. He couldn't find one.

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McKenzie sighed as he stared at the ass of Miranda Keys for another ten seconds. It wasn't his fault he was staring actually, they were all huddled in a dark, damp, tightly enclosed vent or something close to it, while the Spartan III's cut down, tore up, shot up, and blew up every inhuman son of a bitch that crossed their line of sight. As of right now, they were blowing up the last of the Flood infection forms to cross their line of sight.

Sasuke turned around, his shotgun leveled into the chest of a newly infected marine the screamed in pain before falling silent. Sasuke fired point blank, destroying the chest of the man, and killing both the infection form and parasite that was trying to get away from its host. Sasuke didn't think twice about looking at the green and red tainted blood as he fired at another form that dropped from the ceiling. This one held a katana that was broken at the center of the blade. Haku combined fire with Konohamaru to destroy as it ran towards Sasuke. Sasuke opened fire anyways, finishing the remains of it before globs of blue-white sun struck the ground around him.

The three Spartans took cover, twisting under the bolts of plasma that began melting the barge they were riding on. Sasuke gave hand signals to his team, and they nodded. Konohamaru stole the SPKNr Rocket Launcher from Barez while Haku picked up one that a human turned Flood had been carrying. They rolled out of their cover, took aim, and fired. Two plumes of smoke and vapor raced towards the Phantom that was hovering over them. One missile struck the shield surrounding a generator for its anti-gravity system, while the other struck it. The generator sparked, rattled, cried, and then burst into flames. The Phantom swiveled, dropped a bit, and then came back up, only to turn around, and leave.

Sasuke watched it leave, curious that it hadn't stayed to finish fighting them until they were dead, but since it didn't do that that only meant that it wasn't Elites that they were up against. That could only leave a few of the Covenant species he could think of. His money was on the Brutes.

He motioned for his team to take up defensive positions, secure them. His team moved fast, and quickly took up defensive positions before giving him green lights, showing that they were secure now. Sasuke sent a green light as well, and motioned for Keys and the other marines to come out, giving them the all clear. When they all came out, McKenzie was shaking his head sadly as Johnson slapped him on

the back of the head, though the grin he had put the question in that he was probably doing it as well.

The barge came to a stop. Sasuke ordered his team to sweep the area. He held a hand to the Sergeant, motioning for him to keep his men in cover until he got the all clear sign. Twenty seconds later, two green lights appeared, and Sasuke motioned for the others to follow. Konan, Deidara, and Hidan looked around for a moment before walking forward, following the black man as he put out his cigar, readied his rifle, and checked the area over again. He gave Keys a nod, and followed the other marines through the chamber of broken metal, stone, moss, and tentacle looking vines.

"We'll get the Index." Keys told them. "You guys stay here, and don't let anything pass." Sasuke motioned for the others to take up defensive positions as the Johnson led his two marines with her, not really daring to leave her alone for two seconds in enemy territory. Once they were out of sight and earshot, the hum of anti-gravity pods sounded, and a horde of Brutes came into their line of sight. Sasuke winked his green light several times, the _Shot anything that moves_ signal to his team. When they opened fire, so did the others.

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"_Go! Go! Go!_" Sergeant William S. Church screamed as he slammed up against a wall. Women and children screamed as they ran past him, some carrying babies, other carrying precious belongings that were no bigger than their fists or longer than a baseball bat. As he pushed off the rock wall, he spun with the rocking explosion that ripped through his body while bringing his rifle to bear. He stared into the eyes of a Brute with blood covering its face. It gave him a wide grin as it brought its weapon up to his face, an ugly brute launcher, and pulled the trigger. His face exploded into a shower of blood and bone. Rock dropped fast, collapsing next to a fallen man wearing a green vest, dark blue clothing underneath it, and a headband with a leaf carved into the metal on it. Rock's ODST helmet lay between them.

Naruto stood over them, his ghostly image not moving as he watched with wide eyes full of anger and regret. Hinata stood beside him, now certain on what he wanted. It all made sense to her now. Why he fought the UNSC? Why he had such deep hatred from everyone but his own people. He was doing this for them, not for the Covenant.

Naruto's fist clenched tightly as he watched Genin, Chuunin, Jounin, and Anbu try to hold them off. UNSC marines, ODSTs, and Spartans all stood side by side, shooting anything that wasn't human. _I was lied to. _He kept repeating this. He wanted to just go and kill the Brutes, but this wouldn't be a justification to genocide. No. He needed a reason. He needed more of a reason than the famously stupid, "But I saw them do it," because that didn't work with Xedraelee when he was raising him, and it most certainly wouldn't work with the High Council.

Naruto took a calm breath, and continued to watch until the place they were in turned white, meaning that they were at the edge of her memories for this area. Most of it was choppy, cut up, like a memory of a man without a face, but you knew the name, or a DVD skipping

scenes. Her memories in this area, the closest place to the center tower, the Hokage Tower, were short and chopped up, clear evident that she had been further away, possible only learning of these fights from other survivors that had seen them.

When the area turned white, he placed a hand to her head, and they were transported to a ship that was coming down to land in the clearing of a forest. It came down fast and hard, spinning while opening its ramp to let in the survivors that a group of marines had found. He saw a young girl with blond hair get thrown in by a Spartan, and he narrowed his eyes on him. He was the same one that had destroyed the Sacred Ring, he was certain of it. As she was thrown in, the place began to turn white, and Naruto watched as Jiralhanaes came rushing towards them. Before the fighting between the Spartans and Jiralhanae could begin, it turned white, and he found himself in a UNSC Destroyer surrounded by children. Most of them were crying for their parents.

Hinata closed her eyes, looked up at him, and sighed. "You didn't know." It wasn't a question, it was a statement. Naruto nodded slowly, his claws digging into his palm with ease. Words could be altered, misleading, and computers could lie, but memories straight from the mind could not lie. He hated to admit it, but he had been wrong. Maybe the Sangheili were wrong as well. Putting their faith in three leaders that keep themselves hidden from the eyes of most of their followers, had secret meetings, declaring anything spoken against them heresy. Something didn't make sense though.

He gently touched the side of her head one more time as a man walked through them, talking to them with a big smile, promising them revenge. The images faded, Hinata felt a sharp pain leave her head and felt her brain freeze up for a fraction of a second before warming up again. She closed her eyes to hide her pain. When it stopped hurting, she opened them; finding that they were back in the chamber that he had rescued her from.

Hinata looked down, touched the side of her head, brought it back, and stared at the sticky red blood that was on her fingers. It was just a small drop, like when you prick yourself with a needle on the finger. It didn't hurt anymore, but she still couldn't help but touch it, just to rub away the nonexistent pain that was there. Her eyes drifted towards Naruto, wondering what he would do. Would he stay by their side, fight for them, rescue her, or would he simply accept it. When he entered her mind, she got a glimpse of his life back home. It was horrible.

She cringed when she looked over his shirtless form. Though his scars were nonexistent, she could see them. Being burned alive stabbed repeatedly, poisoned, and even sexually assaulted. She couldn't blame him if he wanted nothing to do with them. If he hated them, she couldn't help him.

Naruto sighed, flexed his hands, watching as his small wounds healed. He had often suspected that the Jiralhanae might have done it, but he had never had proof of this. Sure they were treacherous, just plain evil, propagated like a cancer without thinking of lineage or blood, and had no honor in fighting style. Naruto didn't believe in dying with honor. So he couldn't truly say they were different. His words had haunted a few Sangheili, namely the weaker ones, when he told them "Live today, fight tomorrow", because it was the truth. It was a

truth that they needed to accept.

Naruto took another deep breath, raised his left hand, and looked at the cracked helmet in his hands. It was Sore's. He had died, found in the living room, crystal shards in his head, chest, stomach, and crotch. They wanted to make sure he remained dead apparently. At his feet was an energy sword that had been customized for Xedraelee. His father's sword was designed with the same bar of metal, but had a spiraling guard so it came over his hand. His dark purple blood stained the handle.

Naruto felt his anger rise. The Jiralhanae had taken another life from him. They had taken his father from him now. Wasn't it enough that they had taken the lives of his people, left them scattered and divided, possibly even left for dead in the void of space?

Hinata gently placed a hand on his shoulder, getting his attention. "Help me get out of here, and I promise you a safe life in the UNSC. I can guarantee your safety." She pleaded. Naruto looked deeply into her eyes. He saw something in them. She was frightened, uncertain. She wanted to live, even if it meant working with him. But he also saw something else. He couldn't understand it. Was she hiding something from him? Had he missed something when probing her mind?

He shrugged her hand off, not caring if he was polite to one of his own people now. He had been fighting the wrong war, but look at how things had turned out? He had been appreciated by the Sangheili, accepted, loved, and even worshiped as a God by them. He had a father figure, friends, and a family. He was powerful, fast, and cunning. What could the UNSC have done for him? Would they have turned him into another demon like the rest of the children his age? He wouldn't have liked that life. He didn't like his current life, but he did enjoy the simple things he got.

Was that wrong to think like that? No. It was never good to think of the "What if's" in life. He had to focus on his current choices. He could strike back, take them out. He had enough power to do it. No. That wouldn't work. He had to have a good reason before taking them out. He could take them out, but only those that were on High Charity. The Sangheili would think he was mad, consumed by the power of the ring. The Lekgolo would just attack him. The Unggoy would runaway in fear. The Kig-Yar, they might attack him. The San'Shyuum would declare him made as well, ordering his death.

He was alone. He knew it. Unlessâ€¦

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John opened his eyes, scanning over his hands. He felt like he was floating or falling. He wasn't sure which. Looking down at his hands, he blinked away the sand in his eyes, and found a green tentacle wrapped around his body. He ran a scan over his body, but as soon as he had begun moving, he was pulled up into the air. He came to a whiplashing stop, his head jerking forward a bit. He regain his bearings, shaking his head just a bit before a voice echoed from the depths of a chasm filled with tentacles that spread like roots through cracks in the wall, floors, and reached up into the sky above. A massive tentacle slithered out of the chasm below, looking more like a large worm with mouth shaped like a flower with four

petals. As it breathed, green gasses came out of its mouth. It swarmed around John's form as he watched the giant worm with no eyes eye him.

"Whatâ€¦ is that?" Cortana voiced the question racing through his mind. It reeled back a bit, curious about why a female had spoke, rather than John. It knew he was a male. This intrigued Cortana, but she wanted to see if it could speak before speaking again.

"Iâ€¦ I am a monumentâ€¦ to all of your sins." It spoke in a rough, aged, and scratchy voice. Cortana quickly counted down all the missions he had done and completed; all the people he had killed, and all the laws he'd broken and or probably broken in the time she'd known him. If she added it all together, counting all of the odd things that would still be counted as sins, he would have committed aboutâ€¦ John snorted, stopping her from her smartass remark that was about to come out.

A loud roar of anger came from the sky, two tentacles dragging down an, odd looking Elite in odd looking armor. He had seen it once before. Well, he hadn't seen it before personally, but he had seen it from photos. It was called an Arbiter. It was fighting with the tentacles at the moment. John, not really in the mood to die, looked at him, and said, "Relax," getting its attention. "I'd rather not piss this thing off."

"DEMON!" it hissed angrily in its language. John snorted at him. He knew what it said, and he could only smirk at it. He was happy to know what they had named his kind. Even if the name was odd, he did like it.

The creature hissed at them, wrapping a tentacle around both of them to keep them securely in its grip. He lifted John up, its head twisting a bit before speaking. "This one is machine and nerved enhancedâ€¦ and has its mind concluded." It pointed out, growling and breathing out more of the green gasses on him. John snorted at it, more so at the gasses than the giant worm creature that lowered him to bring the Arbiter up a bit. "This one is but flesh and faithâ€¦ and is the more deluded."

"Kill me or release me, parasite. But do not waste my time with talk." The Elite growled in his language. John was lucky that Cortana had updated his translation software, or he might just be slightly confused by what he was saying.

The creature growled angrily, huffing out more of the green gasses over them. "There is much talk. And I have listened through rock and metal and time. Now I shall talk, and you shall listen." He raised two of his tentacles, one holding a little robot that he had seen once before, and the other being a Prophet that he had killed.

"Greetings, I am 2401 Penitent Tangent."

"And I am the Prophet of Regret. Council of the Hier-Hierarch of the Covenant."

"A Reclaimer?! Here?! At lastâ€¦ we have much to do. This facility must be activated if we are to control this outbreak!"

"Stay where you are. Nothing can be done until my sermon is complete!"

"Not true. This instillation is ready to fire on demand."

Regret twitched a bit, annoyed by the Oracle's words. "Of all the objects our lords left behind there are none more worthless than these Oracles. They know nothing of the Great Journey."

"And you know nothing about containment. You have shown complete disregard for even the most basic of protocols."

The giant worm growled at the two, more green smoke bellowing out of its flower petals mouth. "This one's containment," it raised 2401, growling at it before raising the former Prophet, "and this one's Great Journey are the same." It lowered both of them, their screams echoing from the depths of the chasm below. "You're Prophets have promised your freedom from a doomed existence. But you will find no salvation on this ring. Those who built this place knew what they wrought. Do not, mistake their intents."

"This thing is right. Halo is a weapon. You're Prophets are making a big mistake." John told him. The Arbiter glanced over at him, rage building in his eyes as he stared at the face polarized face plate of his enemy.

"Your ignorance has already destroyed one of the Sacred Rings, Demon. It shall not harm another." The creature rumbled out a deep growl as it lowered its head to face the still struggling, though giving less effort now, Arbiter.

"If you will not hear the truth then I shall show it to you. There is still time to stop the key from turning. You will search one likely spot, and you shall search another." He glanced to each of them as he spoke. "Fate had us meet as foes, but this ring shall make us brothers." His tentacles twitched, pulled back, and threw them away as golden rings enveloped them, transporting them to their destinations. With the key being taken care of, he could focus now on the ship that was close to the ground. He could only hope that his followers were still willing to follow him blindly.

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Tartarus's Jiralhanae shoved the prisoners into the holding cell, some mumbling curses, others mumbling smartass remarks about how easy it was to capture them. As the cell doors shut with a loud creak, one of the prisoners got up, annoyance crossing over his face as he leaned up against the wall. Sasuke had been captured by the Brutes, along with his team, all for the sake of a game that they held. He had heard of this. The Covenant often captured impressive marines or ODSs that got their interest, and used them to fight in sporting games. The only reason he knew of this was because of a few survivors that had once been captured talk about how they were to be used for a game of some kind. A fighting game was the only thing that really made sense to him.

"So what now?" Deidara asked lazily from the other side of the cell with Sasuke. Sasuke looked him over, and shrugged his massive shoulders. When Sasuke did this, Deidara sighed, and Hidan and Konan growled angrily. They doubted that they were going to get out of this

alive.

The Brutes that were patrolling the hallway suddenly stopped as explosions sounded from behind the door behind them. It opened, and bolts of plasma and crystal shards melted and tore through their flesh. Sasuke ran to the bars once the attack stopped, looked through them, and gasped at what he saw. John stood in the doorway, Hinata behind him, and a figure in oddly dressed black armor beside him. Cortana appeared on a center panel down the hallway, her image showing her grin to all of them as she opened the doors.

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Yugito felt like she was back at Onyx with Endless Summer doing his review on her grades in his classes. Their eyes were cold, uncaring in the slightest as they stared her down. She felt like she was being watched by millions of them, all of them pointing guns at her. But she wasn't being watched by millions, she was being watched by three people. Their weapons were nothing but bows, arrows, spears, and katanas. She could kill them all, even without her weapons. But even with all of their weapons, all her skills, she really didn't feel like fighting all of them. Something just didn't feel right about these people.

"Madara, why have you come back to us? Did we not banish you for your crimes?" An old man with an eye patch, missing one arm, and a cane in one hand, told them. "And who is this friend that you have brought with you? She is the enemy!" He hissed.

Tobi snorted at him, a grin appearing on his lips as he spoke. "Tobi forgot that you banished us. Yes he did. Tobi was a bad boy." Tobi shook his head. The three growled in annoyance. An older woman with wrinkled skin, snorted at him. "Tobi has forgotten that we were banished, but we need help. Yugito's team has become separated from her, and she needs help." Tobi explained. The old woman gave the Spartan an angry glare.

"Why should we help this woman?" An old man with cracked glasses asked.

"She fights the Demon. That is why she is to be helped." Tobi's face turned sour. Their faces turned sour as well, and Yugito wondered what he was talking about. Why were they banished? What had they done? Tobi shook his head. "You don't get it, do you? The Demon uses you for hosts. That's all he cares about. He wants your bodies for his warriors. Surely you must know this."

"Tobi," The old woman began. "You and your friend are to leave immediately! We here on the Council of Reclamation will not tolerate such violent words! Our God would not like to hear your words of heat towards him." Tobi cursed inwardly. The old woman grinned. Tobi was about to voice his opinion on the matter, but a deep rumble echoed from beneath their feet. Yugito reached for her weapons, but found nothing. They had taken them. She cursed inwardly. Something was coming, and it wasn't happy. She grabbed Tobi, lifting him over her shoulder, and ran towards the flight of stairs that would take them out of the building they were in. Screams from above sounded, and Yugito stopped when she got out of the building as tentacles reached through the building. "You will not escape the wrath of our God!"

Yugito came to a stop, looked up at the ledge where a green mist began to appear. She had a bad feeling about this.

12. Chapter 12

Chapter 12

It was a glorious day for Zhench. He had lived long enough to see the day long promised by the Prophets. The day in which the entire Covenant had hoped for was finally approaching. Truth held up the Icon in his clawed hand, a smile forming on his face as he gave his speech to the others in the Covenant. He was glad that he had lived long enough to see this day. His forefathers had fought the ugly pink fleshed humans for years, died, some lived, and others never saw them. He was one of the lucky ones that never saw them. He had been part of a camera crew that worked on High Charity. But with all the things happening, even Unggoy like him were armed. He carried a Needler. He had tested it a few times, more to just testing his accuracy. He sucked, but he was happy to just have one.

So when golden rings appeared beside him, he shook with fear, unsure on what to do or say. If it was Naruto, then he could relax. If it was a Sangheili, he would be fine so long as he avoided eye contact. If it was a Kig-Yar, he should just run. And if it was a fellow Unggoy, he'd have to stop them. With the Jiralhanae putting their alpha dominance into play over their lesser races, thousands of lower ranking warriors had tried to voice their protest about the Jiralhanae's treatment as they put their alpha dominance into play.

What came out of the rings of gold however, was the last thing he expected. A massive creature of lime green metal and black leather underclothing appeared, unharmed yes, but dangerous, hell yes. John took one look at the Grunt as it raised the Needler, trembling as it did. With a grin on his face, hidden by his helmet, he gave out a regular "Boo" in his normal voice, effectively scaring the poor creature, causing it to flee in terror while throwing its gun in the air, and getting everyone's attention. John snatched it out of the air, looked around for a microsecond, and pointed it at the two Prophets that had their jaws hanging loosely at his sudden appearance.

Truth raised his arms in fear as two Honor Guard Brutes walked up front, their pikes crossing over the floor parted to let them get away. "Kill the Demon!" He hissed angrily as the council began leaving. Sangheili Council members were forced to leave by the Brutes, some of them threatening to kill them where they stood if they didn't get out of their way, while others ran away in fear.

John looked around. Eight Brutes, ten Grunts, and four Jackals. He looked at the ammo in his single Needler he carried. _This won't last long. _John opened fire.

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Hinata watched Naruto get dressed into his armor. She found it odd that she even wanted to watch him. She couldn't take her eyes off of

him. Did she have feelings for him? No. How could she have feelings for someone who had just turned to their side after seeing a bunch of memories that she never wanted to relive? Was her heart that weak? How did she have the weakest of hearts for those that saved her ass? She had loved marines, ODSRs, and even Navy men that saved her ass from certain death. She even loved a doctor once. Was she just attracted to those that had a greater strength than her own?

She sighed, looked away for a moment, and then looked back at him. He had only the bottom half of his suit on and his back turned to her. She couldn't help it. She was drawn to the odd markings on his back. A pattern of paint in the form of tribal marks that crisscrossed over his back, ribs, and shoulders made him look just plain odd. At the end of each marking was an arrow. They ended at his elbows and the small of his back. One might have wanted to get him tested for HIV or just call him another idiot rocker from the old days that thought tattoos were the thing.

Naruto suddenly stopped, growled out something she didn't catch, and turned to face her. "Why are you staring at me?" Hinata looked around the room aimlessly, and he sighed. Women were in fact just as strange as he had read about in the odd books he had found about reproduction on his world. The only difference being that in the books it was just about a guy having tons of sex while in real life, any guy that did that was either really creative or just really stupid. He really didn't understand why one would want multiple wives. Xedraelee had even been offered several wives when he was still a proud warrior that only knew of victory. Even though it was Sangheili nature to have multiple females, he never really enjoyed the idea of it. A female was still a female, regardless of race, nationality, or religion. They may respect you, but if you piss them off, they are a far worse threatening enemy than even the mightiest of Sangheili or Lekgolo.

Naruto sighed. Women were so strange.

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John eyed his handiwork as Cortana entered the systems of High Charity. The Brutes were nothing but bits; blown up by his Needler rounds. The Grunts were all missing heads, most of them looking torn off, rather than shot off. The jackals were—well they just didn't exist anymore. John was very effective at disposing bodies, living proof being the corpses that he had just finished throwing off the edge of the platform that Truth and Mercy had taken down to go into hiding.

John turned around once he was finished dumping bodies, and found Cortana staring at him. He knew she didn't have eyes; they were just programmed to make her feel and look more human. Her _eyes_ were cameras, sensors, and speakers. That was the only reason she could see him at the moment. She opened the door, telling him that Truth was broadcasting on the move, and that she would stay in the system to track him. John had no problems with this of course. Years of working with her, leaving her in odd computer systems, and just plain understanding what she was actually built for kept his mind focused on the fact that he had a mission to complete because he knew she'd be okay.

He ran through the doors, checked left and right with quick glances,

and ran across the dimly lit room towards the other door. He pressed his back against a wall as the door icons changed from red to green, signaling that they were opening. With an angry hiss of gasses, they parted, and a pair of Jackals came running in. One was carrying a beam rifle, the other, a personal shield and plasma pistol. John reached out, grabbing the one with the rifle first, and snapped it neck before it could squawk out a cry. The other turned when the sound of bones breaking sounded, and stared at the Demon in front of him as he reached out, grabbing hold of his neck. With a simple twist, it snapped, and the body went limp. John grabbed the rifle, holstered the pistol to his side, and tossed the spent Needler away.

Cortana appeared again, wondering what his hold up was. When she saw the bodies, she quickly faded away. John shook his head, walked around the bulkhead, and raised the rifle to stare at the area ahead of him. Three Brutes were walking around, all hefting their Brute Spiker. Even though they were crude weapons, not at all like the Covenant weapons, or other weapons for that matter, they did have enough punch to punch through most types of armor, even Spartan armor.

John squeezed off a single round of highly pressurized plasma that discharged, and flew straight through the first Brute's skull, dropping a few seconds later. He had first thought he missed, but when the Brute dropped, he remembered that they had a delayed reaction to almost everything. Shooting them in the head, even destroying most of the head or brain left them just a bit confused by logic told them that they were dead. When the first one dropped, the other two came out. John squeezed the trigger two more times. The first went through the skull of one while the other just tore off half of the other's face. The two fell down, and four Grunts went running away, their weapons thrown away.

John frowned. This was too easy.

He slowly walked through the doors, turned to his right, then turned to his left, and was face to faceplate with a Brute that had its Spiker pointed at his face. John slapped it away, raised the beam rifle, and fired into his jaw. The pressurized plasma bolt tore through his bottom jaw and exited out the top of his skull. His head was gone, and he dropped down to the ground. John looked over at his motion tracker, cursing it. Why did it not register that he was an enemy? Were they getting smarter?

He turned to his right, raised his rifle, looked around, and sighed happily. No targets for now.

He pushed forward, coming to a set of doors again. Cortana hacked them, appearing on the pedestal beside him as she concentrated on what was outside. Enemy contacts, Brutes again. John nodded for her to open the door as he grabbed a plasma grenade and frag grenade. He pumped them once, then twice, and then a third time as the doors parted. He hurled the plasma first, and it stuck to the face of a Brute that was in the far back next to a few Grunts that were getting turrets in place. He tossed the frag grenade as the plasma went off, melting and blowing up the warriors around the Brute that cried in fear. The frag bounced off the floor, off a pillar, and detonated in the middle of a group of stunned Jackals. Bone, blood, and bits of metal flew away like confetti.

John ran towards the nearest pillar of metal, took cover, lifted the beam rifle, and spun around the corner. He looked around, a quick two second check before taking cover again. He checked his motion tracker. Nothing on radar, or at least nothing moving anyways.

He walked out from behind his cover, replacing the beam rifle for his duel Spikers that he had relieved from a pair of down Brutes. He scanned over the area, looking for any additional targets before coming up to a ledge with a circle hole in the center of it, two lines running through it, making four triangles appear on it. Cortana appeared next to John on the pedestal and looked at the hole the opened up. Purple light like rain fell down from it. Cortana closed her eyes a bit, smiled, and motioned for him to use it. She muttered something about him not being afraid of heights after his stunt on the Cairo.

John jumped in, and fell towards the bottom floor. He felt sick for some reason. He had been on Gravlifts several times in his past, but it was a sensation you couldn't shake easily. His insides felt like they were twisted, chopped up, and then stitched back together when he dropped down. He shook the dizziness away from his vision, looked up, raised a Spiker, looked around, and lowered it as he ran towards the nearest wall. He waited for the door to light up before walking. Cortana stopped him when the door went green, signaling that it was opening.

"What is it?" John sounded rather annoyed, but she decided to keep quiet until she was certain she was right. She checked, rechecked, rechecked again, and then appeared on a pedestal beside him.

"There's an IFF Transponder in this area." She placed both hands on her head as she began filtering out the data. She closed her eyes as she concentrated harder on the task at hand. She finally opened her eyes after two minutes of searching, and grinned. "It's a civilian, but she's the one that Sasuke is here to retrieve. Her name is Hyuuga Hinata, and was captured some time ago on Vorrac. We need to get her out of her, Chief."

"Where is she?" She detected the faint traces of his annoyance. Both of them knew that they had to take out the damn Prophet before he could activate the ring. Cortana shook her head and was quiet for a full second before showing him on his HUD. She was at least a half a kilometer away from his current coordinates. It would take him a while to traverse the place, move around enemies or through them, and find it. "I suggest you hurry up. If I'm looking at it right, that's a residential area, and several Brutes are moving in on that area." John ran through the door before she could finish her statement. She watched him go through two Brutes without stopping after sticking both in the stomach with plasma grenades, and run past them.

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Naruto clicked his gauntlets into place as a hologram of a woman dressed in royal robes, an Obi-sash keeping it closed, a single fox tail, two fox ears, and long hair that came down like waves of fire appeared. Naruto knew this was bad. He hated the AI with a passion, but he respected her. Without her, he might have been killed off for

not understand most, if not all, of the Covenant languages. Besides the main ones, such as the Lekgolo, Sangheili, San'Shyuum, Unggoy, Kig-Yar, Yamane, and Jiralhanae, there were others in the Covenant, just not warrior types or even capable of fighting. Most were simple merchants, while other designed weapons from Forerunner tech given to them by the Minister of Fortune, a San'Shyuum that had worked under Truth while he was formerly known as the Minister of Fortitude.

The AI was named after his mother, Uzumaki Kushina, though he called her Kaa-san when alone with her. She understood why he called her this, but it was annoying as hell to her. Kushina's actual name was Forever Purity, but since she was given to Naruto, Naruto decided to dub her Kushina, because she was the only female he'd come across in the Covenant that was remotely human in appearance. She didn't mind having two names though, she found funny and ironic at how Naruto and Xedraelee used to hold conversations with her.

The AI was actually a version of one of the previously stolen AIs that the UNSC used. The one they stole had called its self Dead Sea. It took the Huragok two weeks to produce a single AI, and had been a failure. The second one was Kushina. Mercy had given him to her out of a sign of good faith in his powers and loyalty. Regret hated him for that, but ultimately saw why when Naruto was trying to speak with Unggoy that helped take care of him.

Mercy had always been the nicest of the three Prophets. He had always made sure the boy was safe, well as safe as he could make him. And he always took the time to see his powers. He made a habit of studying them, claiming that if he could find a way to unlock the power; there army would be able to crush the UNSC for what they did to his world. Naruto at the time had been angry with what had happened, so it wasn't hard for him to show his powers at the time.

Kushina was given to him around this time. So, with her now being here, he could only think of two things that was about to happen. The first was that the Council wanted to speak with him. He doubted that one. The Jiralhanae had taken the Council members to the Halo ring to watch its cleansing flame appear, so that left the only other option, which was that he was about to be attacked by someone or something.

He sighed, looked over to where Hinata was fiddling with a small data pad. Naruto closed his eyes, slid his helmet on, fiddled with the pedestal that Kushina appeared out of, and pulled out her chip. He inserted it into his wrist gauntlet in his right arm. He felt a small tingle run through his body as she began doing a system check. Once she was finished, she whispered, "Systems all green. Are youâ€| sure you wanna do this? She's only human," as Naruto opened his eyes to look back at her.

He really didn't know anymore. He had spent his life fighting people that worked for the UNSC, and now he was helping one live to see another day. True she was from his world, but she worked for the UNSC. Plus, there was also the fact that he'd been lied to. How could he even stand to wear this armor now? How could he even stand to be on High Charity? Could she really get into the UNSC safely without making him fight?

He shook his head.

No. He had to stand by the Sangheili. They raised him, cared for him, treated him with respect, gave him a reason to fight, trained him how to fight, and above all, they acknowledged his existence. He would fight for them now, even if he was the only one.

He took a deep breath, exhaled, and smiled. He would be fighting for both of his people: The humans from his world and the Sangheili that had acknowledged his existence. Even if he was alone he would do it. What was the worst that could happen? It wasn't like his life could get any worse. His father was dead, his people scattered or dead, and now the simple truth of who had really destroyed his world. He would kill them. He would kill them all for their crimes against him and his people.

He walked over to Hinata, getting her attention as he grabbed the data pad from her. He typed a few commands in, and the walls hissed open. A mist came out of the walls, and a bright light flickered into existence. Metallic arms came out holding special weapons. Hinata gawked at them. One of them resembled a human sniper rifle, but when Naruto grabbed it, he broke it in half, forcing the long barrel backwards onto the bottom of it, and giving him an arm guard for the weapon. He grabbed a rifle that had the chamber of a revolver, a classic gun hardly seen anymore in the USNC, but with a double barrel, one under the other with a small gap between them. He placed the odd rifle on the small of his back while putting the broken down sniper rifle on his back. He pulled out two human looking pistols that had a large belly to them with a plus sign in the center of it. He put those on his thighs.

Silent alarms went off in the chamber, and Naruto pulled the broken down sniper rifle from his back, popped the scope up, and connected it to his HUD wirelessly. He switched to heat signatures only, finding only five Jiralhanae above him. It was clear that they knew what they were looking for by their manner of walk. He looked back at the wall where the remaining weapons were still in the arms of the tiny robots. He pulled out a duffle bag, motioned for her to grab as many as she could, and stuff them in the bag. She reached for one, but it suddenly shocked her when she touched it. Naruto growled mentally. Of course she couldn't touch them. They were designed only for him and Xedrael.

He pulled the pistol out, and looked it over. "Kushina, disable bio readers on all weapons. I'm not going to be the only one using these today." There was a full second pause before a ping sounded from the weapon. "You can grab them now. Move fast, we have company coming." Hinata nodded as quickly as she could, and began moving weapons to bag. Naruto took a deep breath, and looked over at the corner of his HUD where he read waiting for password. He could do this. He had to do this.

He looked back at his HUD through the wireless link to the weapon, and got a lock on the first Jiralhanae that was approaching the stairs to the underground room. He took a calm breath, slowed his heartbeat down a bit, and squeezed off a round of highly concentrated red plasma that flew through the wall, superheating it in a flash, tore through three floors, two foot thick metal walls, a single metal bracer, and then straight through the Jiralhanae's chest, tearing and melting half of his body. The other four jumped back a bit, but Naruto quickly pulled the trigger three more times, killing all four of them, one of them earning him a two-for-one shot. They died

instantly, and he looked around.

He could see others heading this way. Hundreds of Jiralhanae were running towards his home. Some wore Jump Packs carrying Fuel Rods; others were holding Brute Shots, Brute Spikers, and a single one holding a Gravity Hammer. It was Minashu. He had come to watch him die obviously. Naruto would enjoy killing him to figure out who lead that campaign against his homeworld. Minashu might not know who ordered it, but he would certainly know who lead the attack.

Naruto grinned happily as he watched more Jiralhanae came down the stairs. He pulled his other rifle out, slinging the other one on his back, took aim, and began firing as the metal door slid open. Eight Jiralhanae fell down from the barrage of red plasma bolts that cut through their flesh and armor like a hot knife through butter. Naruto let the barrel cool down before firing again as another wave of idiot Brutes came at him. He opened up, never letting the barrel cool down until they were all dead. His hands tingled from the heat, but he ignored it.

Five minutes later, he had a stack of corpses in front of the door set so high, set so full of holes, and melted to the point that all their flesh was burned away. Hinata finished putting the weapons in the bag when the whole building shook. She looked up at the ceiling as dust began falling from it. Naruto pulled the broken sniper rifle off his back, put it together by locking the longer barrel in place, and looked straight up. White blobs of super heated radioactive plasma flew at the home. He knew the top part of the house would quickly give away to the Covenant's idea of a RPG, but he knew it would take a while before it could get through to this area.

"Kushina, can you still access the security systems to the house?"

"Do you believe me to be stupid?" She replied in her heated human voice. She sounded more Japanese when speaking English, a possible Covenant standard more so for him than anything else. Naruto wondered if he should give a reply, but soon decided not to. He could hear the sounds of her grunting as more and more of her key security systems on the main parts of the house were destroyed. If she were visible, she would be glowing blood red with dark green eyes at the moment. Naruto chewed on his bottom lip. He still had one trick left if it came down to it, but he'd rather not use it just left. If at anything, he wanted to never use that trick. He'd sooner blow the place-

"Kushina, can the vault still survive detonation sequence?" There was no reply for a full second. Even though she was the Covenant standard of a 'smart' AI, she was still rather dumb at calculations, something that they never really put in her. They made her so she could only translate and teach Naruto their languages. It made sense really, but it did bug him and her to no end sometimes.

"I believe so. Small parts, namely the door, left corner up front by the door, and the back corner in the vault, are damaged by heated weapons. It could sustain the blast, but I am twenty eight percent certain that it will not hold." Naruto rolled his eyes. The last time he went by her odds, which were about the same, he came out alive. He quickly pushed Hinata into the vault, grabbed the weapons, walked in,

and shut the door. There was a hiss of gasses leaking in to pressurize it to normal levels for them to be sustained until the blast was over.

Hinata stared at him as he punched in a bunch of codes on the terminal beside the door. Red lights began to blind her as Naruto punched the screen. He grabbed her, slung the weapons over his shoulder, and ran to the back of the vault. He placed his body over hers as he watched the countdown on his HUD. When it read 0:00, he covered her head with his arms, ducked his own head down, and held her a bit tighter. A loud bang sounded from outside. Hinata screamed, but her screamed was nothing but a shadow to the blast outside. Heat washed over them, and Naruto cursed. He looked up for a fraction of a second, and his eyes widened as he saw the massive steel door flying at them.

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Neji walked over to Moegi, a young girl with brown hair. Years of never being able to wash her hair properly had turned it brown, and she was rather sad about it. Whatever color her hair used to be was nothing but a distant memory to her now anyways, and it wasn't like she had time to just worry about it anyways. Beside her was her boyfriend, Udon. He was bleeding from the stomach. Neji watched Anders did her best to fix him up, but it was too late by the time she got there, or by the time any of them figured out what was going on.

The Pelican jerked a bit as it hit some turbulence, and Neji braced himself by grabbing the webbing for storing items.

_In Amber Clad _had been infected by the Flood that Orochimaru had brought onboard inside his body. He was a spy for the Council of Reclamation. Not at all surprising in Hiruzen's case, but he was still visible 'shocked' by it. Orochimaru had been infected long before anyone knew about it, and had been able to hide it. Once he was alone, he released the ones he brought with him, and took over the ship's bridge. As more people got infected from transports being brought back from where Orochimaru and Sarutobi said other survivors where, Neji became aware that the best option was to head down to solid ground.

While trying to get off the ship, Udon had been shot by a partially controlled marine that was trying to fight for control. Tenten killed him, but not before it managed to kill two people, one being a young woman named Temari, and a man named Gai. Both had been shot in the head, killed instantly, and painlessly. Their bodies had been left on the ship as it began to make a Slipspace jump. The only regret that Neji had was that he couldn't get to the controls to initiate the self-destruct sequence. Who knew how many lives that would save? He might even be able to prevent them from getting off the Halo ring.

The Pelican jerked again, and Neji's head bounced off the ceiling. He shook his head to clear the disorientation and make the stars he saw go away. He needed to be paying attention for this mission. He needed to figure out where the hell all the Flood were coming from, take them out, and figure out how the hell to get off the damn ring.

Anders suddenly stopped moving. Neji looked at her, and she shook her head sadly. Moegi broke down into tears, weeping for her dead boyfriend. Neji closed his eyes as well. Another life lost on his watch. First Lee, and now a survivor from his world. He would make it up somehow. Somehow, things would be squared away to make it right. He would see it done no matter what.

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John raised his carbine, took aim, and began firing as the Brutes continued to blast the house with brute launchers and fuel rods. The house was melting away from the combined radiation and heat. They didn't even seem to know he was here. Those that had others die around them must have somehow thought it was whatever was inside the home killing them. If that was the case, which he doubted, then what was in there that they wanted to kill so bad that they'd ignore him? Yeah, Hinata was in there, but she had no military training, and he highly doubted that another Spartan was in there.

Nevertheless, he'd continue to fire until he had nothing left to shoot or run out of ammo.

He put in a fresh magazine for his carbine, took aim, squeezed the trigger-

-and the building exploded into a sun. Brutes screamed in fear and pain as they were melted by the blast. John took cover, his shields completely drained from the blast. His faceplate had polarized a second too late, and he was now blind as his eyes quickly began to adjust back to normal. The cries of pain from Brutes behind him forced him to whip around the corner, carbine up and looking for a target as red bolts of plasma slashed through the cloud of dust and debris.

John stared at the dust as a small figure appeared in the center of it. No, there were two figures in the dust cloud. He could barely make them out, but it was clear on who they were. One was holding a gun, and though odd looking was obviously spent. The muzzle was glowing red and melting away. The figure snorted at it, shaking its head before throwing it away, and watching as it suddenly blew up with a tiny _bang_. _Once the weapon was destroyed, he pulled out a rifle that had a long barrel broken back to make it an arm guard. He turned around, motioned for the girl that wore rags to take his hand. John instantly figured that to be Hinata, but he was more curious about her rescuer. Was it a Spartan or something else?

John came out from behind his cover, took a few steps towards them, his weapon down low, but still high enough that he could quickly take him out if he needed to. The black armored figure turned his head when John stepped on the arm of a slightly alive Brute. The figure took one look at him, screamed something he didn't understand, and rush him his weapon began spitting out globs of red plasma. John took cover while returning fire. The armored warrior was quick, and managed to somehow evade his return fire.

John cursed as he reloaded his weapon, spun around, looked for his target, and was hit from behind. The girl wearing rags and a blanket had come out of the center of the blast zone, screaming for them to stop. Her cries fell on deaf ears. The black figure dropped down on John, three energy blades forming on its fists like claws. It threw a

punch at his head, missed, threw another one, missed again, and John grunted as he head butted it in the head to get him off. The figure reeled back from the blow, shook its head before it was punched away. It skidded backwards, jumped to its feet, and raised a fist threateningly before the girl threw herself between them. The two came to a stop just as they were about to punch through her.

"Stop it! Both of you!" She shouted. She looked at the black armored teenager, and smiled. His energy blades were so close she could feel the heat on her chest. John slowly pulled his fist back, but slowly inched his hand down to the grip of his needler pistol just in case. The figure also pulled back, but unlike John, he didn't reach for his weapons. Once she was certain that neither was about to attack the other, she addressed the figure first. "Naruto, this is John, one of the Spartans that saved our people back home. He's the reason I'm alive today. You mustn't attack him."

Naruto sighed explosively, but nodded. Once she saw this, she turned to John. "Chief, this is Uzumaki Naruto, the Kyuubi Jinchuuriki." John quickly brought his needler pistol up, and pointed it at Naruto. He wanted to kill him for killing his brothers and sisters. Kyuubi had taken too many of his Spartans from him, and he wanted to avenge them so badly that he was willingly to kill her to kill him. But he couldn't pull the trigger. Years of fighting for humanity had damaged him to the point he didn't have it in him to kill a human anymore. He could do it, but it would be too painful to know that he, a hero to humanity, had killed one that he was trying to protect. He just couldn't pull the trigger.

So he lowered his weapon.

Hinata exhaled a breath she wasn't aware she was holding when she saw him put his weapon back on his side. John shook his head. Naruto just stared at him before his head turned sharply to the sound metal sliding down the pile of molten metal. John spun around, his carbine in hand, and rose to face a Brute that was staring at the three with hateful eyes. Naruto kicked a long slab of metal into his hands, and threw it through his chest as John squeezed off two rounds into its face. It stood upright for a few more seconds, grinning at them before its eyes rolled into the back of its head, and pitched forward.

Hinata blinked a few times, mortified at what she had seen the two of them. As the Brute rolled down the pile of metal, Naruto looked John over before walking past him and Hinata. John turned to watch him, making sure he didn't pull something on him. Naruto reached down into the pile of rubble, growled out something that they didn't quite full hear, and pulled out a hunk of molten metal with a leather handle attached to it. He threw it away, screaming something that Cortana was able to roughly translate as "Boy of a Biscuit" in Sangheili language. She still needed to refine it.

"What's wrong, Naruto?" Hinata asked.

Naruto cracked his neck as he looked his armor over. "My weapons are destroyed. All I have left is my energy blades and pistols which I doubt," he pulled one out, took aim at a small rock in the distance, pulled the trigger only to have nothing happen, "work." He tested the other weapon, and it too was broken. He tossed it away, and tested his wrist blades. Three glowing red blades formed on each hand

between his knuckles. They worked, and he tested a few more. Two appeared on his feet like his previous armor had. One appeared on his elbows, and another set appeared on his knees.

John looked him over, almost gawking at how many blades he seemed to have. When Naruto got through checking his armor out, he looked at John at he raised a carbine for him that was resting under some rubble. Naruto shook his head. The only reason he ever created those guns was because most of the Covenant weapons were too big for him to use. When he created his pistols and rifles, it had been from the findings of human weapons and converting them with plasma coils and charges. Mercy had approved of this, but Regret hated it and him with a passion for it while Truth cared very little for it.

Naruto cracked his neck again. "I think we need to get moving. There's no way in hell the Jiralhanae are going to miss a chance to take my ass out." John could only nod at his words. It made sense to him, and he needed a place to check his armor out.

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Neji swore as he checked his armor out. It was fine. No breaches, no dents, no damage. He was happy with that, but angry with why he had to check his armor out. He looked around, swearing again as he took note of the charred landscape, destroyed dead trees, and one destroyed pelican. The pilot had been infected, and tried to land the pelican before it got full control. Before he 'landed' he had told them that he was going down hard. That gave them enough time to get strapped in and lock everything down. When they crashed, only one person was hurt, and that had been Tenten, only because she had opted for standing since Moegi needed a seat to be strapped in. She was okay, a little banged up, but okay.

Hanabi popped Tenten's arm back into place, causing her to hiss in pain before shaking her head at it. Neji sighed. Everyone had been injured in some form of way during the crash. Tenten had suffered only a cracked rib and dislocated arm. Hanabi suffered a cracked rib, damaged plates to her armor, and damage to her right eye. It was minor damage. Neji was lucky; he only suffered from minor bruises.

Neji shook his head as he looked over their weapons and ammunition. They only had one SPKNr Missile left, thirteen clips for SMGs and assault rifles, two assault rifles, three SMGs, and one sniper rifle with only two clips. The rest of the ammo and weapons had been scattered from their long crash. The pilot had been able to deploy most it before he crashed, so Neji was at least happy about that. The only problem was that he'd have to find it, and fast. He had a bad feeling that it was going to take him awhile to find it all, and use it against whatever was going to come after them.

The radios suddenly crackled, hissed, and then Yugito's voice came over them. _"This is Nii Yugito, Spartan G-207, requesting aid! I have found more survivors from the Elemental Nations with me and the Flood are approaching my position. If anyone can hear me!" _The radio went dead after a long scream of pain sounded over it.

Neji turned to Ambers as she finished checking over the old man. He survived as well. "Can you track that?!" She nodded as she pulled her laptop out. "I want to know where she is twenty minutes ago." Anders

was already working on it.

"There is no need." Hiruzen explained sharply. "We can lead you to them. I know of only one other place more of our people live. Come, we shall show you."

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Serene, a member of the SpecOps Jiralhanae squad, collapsed to the ground dead from a needler round that went through the back of his skull. He hit the ground silently, and John tilted his head a bit to check him over. He nudged him with his foot before putting an extra round in the back of his skull. He took in a deep breath as he turned to face Naruto and Hinata. Naruto was glaring at him through his helmet, but decided to keep quiet while looking over the ledge they were at. John walked back over to him, hefting the body. When he got to the side, he threw him over the edge, and watched him fall over the edge into the cloud of methane. When he looked over at Naruto, he could have sworn he saw him give him the finger.

"Not a very nice guy." Cortana mumbled. John agreed with a grunt as he looked over the edge again. The Spartan looked back at him, back over the edge, and then back at him. "Nice view," Cortana sounded agitated. "But I don't see what you're looking at."

"I told you once, didn't I?" Naruto sounded bored as he spoke. Hinata looked over the edge again, and suddenly paled.

"We're jumping?!" She shrieked. Naruto nodded while grabbing her by her waist before jumping over the edge. John followed shortly, not really certain on what they were going to land on. Naruto dug his gauntlet claws into the hard metal of the wall to slow his decent before finally jumping away from the wall. John repeated this process, and after a fun thirty second fall with them jumping from wall to wall before finally landing just two kilometers above the cloud of methane on a rusted ledge with no working lights. Hinata was breathing deeply as she tried to hide her fright. John landed down in front of him, shaking his head at the crazy teenager's style of getting around.

"How'd you know about this place?" Cortana asked.

"Can you shut her up? She's giving me a headache." Kushina snapped. Cortana swore angrily at the Covenant AI, swearing that if she could, she'd tear her apart, bit by bit. When Cortana learned that Naruto had an AI, her first thought was how incredible stupid it would be for him to have one, let alone have one that could only translate their language. But Hinata had to point out that he only knew, or to her knowledge, Sangheili language. Kushina also informed them of the name of the AI she had been created from, which caused no reaction of anger, sadness, or shock from Cortana. After all, it was common sense that the Covenant didn't innovate, they imitated. Naruto's armor, though crude and more Sangheili in design, still had some of the Spartan's MJOLNIR armor system. Naruto's armor having a slot for Kushina was further proof of this.

"Kushina, keep your mouth shut, I need to concentrate." Naruto hissed. He walked through the metal doors as they parted. John followed, raising his carbine as he followed behind Hinata. "But to answer your question— whatever your name is. The reason I know

about this place is because Xedraelee and I used to live down here." He came to a stop at an old rusty door, typed in a code, and it hissed open. Despite the outside appearance, the inside was rather pretty nice.

He walked into the back room, rummaging through a few boxes as John and Hinata approached him. He threw something to Hinata, which she caught and looked at. It was a solid red kimono and Hakama set. He motioned to another room, and she walked in after John checked it over. Cortana appeared on a dust covered pedestal. Her image was distorted by the sand until John came over and cleaned it up.

Naruto pulled out a laptop, a few small trinkets, and a crystal. He put the crystal in his belt pocket, the trinkets in a black bag he found next to the boxes, and the laptop in front of him. He turned it on as Hinata came out. He didn't pay attention to her, instead focusing on the computer he was working on. Cortana watched him punch in codes, cross-reference security programs, and search the COM Channels for anything important that was going on.

"What are you doing?" Hinata asked as she stood over him. Naruto reached into the box, fiddled with something before pulling out a small scroll. He shoved it into her chest as he typed with one hand. Hinata looked at it before opening. It was a list of her family lineage. She rolled it up in complete shock and turned to him. "Where did you get this?"

"When I went back to our homeworld, I took anything of value just in case some survivors were found at some point in time. I remembered reading in there about a clan that had lavender eyes like your own. It wasn't that hard to figure out your name either since it was written on your haori. (It should be noted that he calls a lab coat this since he doesn't know.) Besides, I enjoyed learning more about my history. It helped me understand why I was hated so much." He stopped typing, and Cortana suddenly blinked.

"I'm picking up transponders in lower levels. It's a bunch of marines and Spartan III's." Cortana looked visibly shocked.

"There is no doubt that the Jiralhanae were planning on using them for their games of proving themselves worthy to be the new Honor Guards for the Hierarchs." Naruto stood up, shutting down the laptop as he did while punching in a few codes. "It's time to leave. This way, I know where they are. It won't take us long to get there." He tossed the laptop away while Hinata and John followed him into a small elevator shaft. "Plug your ears, female." He ordered. She did so just as a loud bang sounded from below.

"What did you just blow up your old home?" Cortana asked.

"For a 'smart' AI, you sure are dumb as hell." Cortana opened her mouth to say something but quickly shut up seeing the fruits of his plan. She had at first detected hundreds of Brutes, Jackals, and Grunts guarding the area that they were heading to, but now all she could detect were probably no more than fifty. His little explosion had lured a lot of them away to figure out what had just happened. It was clear now that he was on their side, or at least making an effort to help out.

Yugito took aim and fired at the approaching Flood controlled humans that ran at her with swords, stakes, spears, and metal objects. Beside her, Tobi continued to just unload on them. When they both clanked empty, they inserted fresh ones, and began mowing them down. Behind them was a crowd of scared survivors, most of them homeless people that had been forced into the life style. One of them was armed with a massive sword, and cutting anything down with it that dared to try and get near him. She had heard him declare that he was the Demon of the Mist, whatever that was, while he decapitated four to eight enemies with a single swing.

She cursed inwardly. This wasn't working. She was almost out of ammo, and Tobi's aim was getting worse as he continued to bleed out from his wounds that he had sustained from getting up the stairs. He was probably on the verge of passing out.

The roar of cries forced her to continue firing until she either ran out of ammo or got overrun. Yahiko, Mikoto, a young man that went by the name of Nagato, and young man named Kabuto continued to defend everyone with swords or bows and arrows. She wondered just how long she could hold out before she ran out of ammo and got forced into a wall where she would die. She cast a quick glance behind her to see the faces of hundreds of people that longed to live. She couldn't fail. She had to save them all.

She could only hope that her message got to the others and that they were alive.

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Naruto dropped a few Jiralhanae with his energy blades while John just shot them in the face. Hinata watched them kill everything before John gave the all clear that she was safe to come out of hiding. Naruto followed her closely as they walked up the last set of doors while a squad of marines kept their eyes locked with Naruto. They weren't very happy about learning that he was the Kyuubi and that he was the one that had been working with the Covenant, but if John trusted him, then they were willing to trust him as well. Naruto walked up the doors, Hinata behind him, and John at his side. The doors slid open, and Naruto raised a former brute rifle. John raised a needler, and both opened fire on the Brutes that were guarding the place. They dropped quickly, and Cortana appeared on the pedestal again.

The bars opened up, and Sasuke walked while the others did the same. Naruto walked past him, interested in the surviving Jiralhanae as he tossed his weapon to the ground. The Brute rolled over, his chest and body a mess of melted flesh and fur. It cried in pain as Naruto placed a foot on his wounds. The Brute glared at him as he pressed down on the wound a bit harder. It roared in anger before Naruto stepped off of him.

"Who lead the attack on my homeworld?" It roared at him in response, and Naruto sighed. He pulled out a small triangle device and thumbed a few small buttons on it with his claws. "I really hated trying to figure out how you bastards think, but that's for another day. If you don't tell me what I wanna know, I'll just search your minds' memories until I find what I'm looking for. Now you either tell me, or I introduce you to a new level of pissed off." It roared at him

again. Naruto sighed. "Fuck you too," he told him while slapping the chip into the side of his head.

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While Naruto talked with the Brute, Sasuke, Haku, and Konohamaru, along with the captured marines looked around to find new weapons. As Naruto went surfing through the Brutes mind, Sasuke pointed his plasma rifle at him. John shrugged, and Hinata walked over to him. "It's good to see you again, Hinata. How are you?" Sasuke asked.

"I'm okay." She looked over at Naruto as he let go of the Brute after breaking his neck. He looked ready to snap as he walked over to them. "Are you okay, Naruto?" Upon hearing this name, Sasuke raised his plasma rifle, took aim, and got his gun knocked away. John shook his head, and he gave him an angry glare. "Sasuke, listen to me." Hinata pleaded as Naruto readied his energy swords and claws. She motioned for him to stand down, and he did a few seconds later. "Listen to me Sasuke. He's not evil. He was used by the Covenant, and brainwashed into believing that it was the UNSC that destroyed our home. He's the reason I'm alive right now. And we need to work together in order to get out of here."

"I hate to ruin on your parade, but I've got multiple contacts coming down the lift." Cortana suddenly cut them off. "Lots of contacts," she repeated as Naruto walked out of the chamber. Sasuke team took aim at his back as he walked towards the lift. When the reinforcements came down, they were greeted by an angry Naruto that crushed all but the Brutes quickly. He made sure the Brutes suffered dearly for their crimes to his people. Cortana and everyone watched as he single handily killed all but a few Grunts that a few marines were able to get.

"Come, we must go." Naruto ordered as he took the lift. He sounded completely angry now. Something was wrong. He hadn't been this cold while they came down here to get the captured marines, Kushina was oddly quiet now. Everyone lined up behind the Chief as he took the lift after Naruto took it. The marines went next, followed by Hinata while Sasuke's team followed her. When they were all upstairs, they spread out. Naruto was at the door with a hand on the side of his helmet. He was shaking. The marines took cover behind the walls and pillars while Sasuke's team looked around the place. John looked nervously at Hinata and then Naruto. Something was wrong. Naruto was shaking his head, and a red aura was beginning to cover him. The marines looked worriedly towards Naruto as he turned to face them.

"Is something wrong Naruto?" Hinata asked fearfully.

"I cannot help you anymore. Though you are my true people, my people need aid. Right now, this place is coming apart, and my people need me to be with them and help them bring an end to this Civil War."

"But we are your people." Haku told him. Naruto shook his head. "You view them as your people, more than you do us? Why?"

"I was raised by them, loved by them, and accepted by them. I will do anything for them because they at least saw me as something that

wasn't a monster. I'm sorry, but I will help you as best I can. I can lure the Sangheili away from you so long as you follow this route." He uploaded the route to where Truth was heading into Cortana's logs. "I'm sorry, but I can do no more. I must help the Sangheili. I owe them my life, so I shall give my life for them since no else ever wanted to." He walked up to John and Sasuke, gripped both by their chest plates, and pulled them to his face. "Know this however. For every drop of blood she loses," he nodded to Hinata, "You will pay with a gallon of your own." He let them go, walked backwards, and vanished from sight.

The doors parted, and closed as two Brutes collapsed into pieces. Deidara put the brute launcher on his shoulder as he watched the blood seep from under the door. "So he's on our side just like that, but he's still running to them?" He questioned.

Screams of pain and gurgling cries from Brutes sounded on the other side. Hinata's eyes softened. "Yes, just like that." She replied sadly.

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"Come to me, Kyuubi child. I shall show you how weak you really are." Minashu whispered from his spot on High Charity. Hundreds of Jiralhanae stood behind him, all of them hefting brute launchers. Lekgolo shifted from foot to foot as they searched for their target. Teams of Kig-Yar and Unggoy looked around for their target as well. Naruto was their target. He was their one and only target. Anything else that got in their way was just an obstacle that would be removed by the Lekgolo. Minashu was taking no chance with Naruto. Everyone wore a red crystal. Minashu unconsciously rubbed his crystal as he watched the red glow brighten. _It's time to put you in your place, human scum. _

13. Chapter 13

Chapter 13

His sword, though chipped and dulled from years of improper care, tore through five infected bodies like a hot knife through butter. They dropped into two pieces, some still crying in agony as they were assimilated with the Flood before he crushed their heads with his heel. Zabuza was tired, and his body hurt. His muscles had been overused. He wasn't hurt, just exhausted. But he had to keep fighting. If he failed, then the Demons would break through their line and consume the helpless civilians behind him.

Looking over his shoulder, he spotted his real reason for fighting. His five year old son, stood behind Yugito as she continued to pepper the enemy with her SMGs. If he died, then he'd lose his mind.

He turned back to the fight at hand. He had to keep fighting until they were all dead or help arrived. He was hoping that help arrived soon, only because the safety of his son, along with the other civilians, took top priority over all fights at this point. Without a second thought, he rushed the eighteen rushing Flood infected civilians that carried swords, rocks, and sticks.

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Sasuke took a calming breathe, closed his left eye, and stared at the Jackal at the other side of the bio garden. Below them were three Hunters, eight Elites, three Grunts, and fourteen Brutes. The Jackal he was targeting was standing on a ledge, sniping Elites. As Sasuke looked down the long alien beam rifle, he remembered just why he hated the damn thing. They had no reticule, laser light, or even a simple scope. He had no way of really knowing if his target was cleanly lined up with his rifle. The only way he'd know was with a test shot and a shit load of luck. The only reason he was using the damn thing was because he was the only one that had descent scores for his team while using the damn thing. Of course he would rather have a shotgun, but since he could only get his hands on Covenant weapons, he had to make do.

Sasuke pulled the trigger once, and watched as the bolt of blue plasma tore the beak off of the Jackal before he pulled the trigger again, this time hitting him through the head. This alerted the other Jackal, but Sasuke already had him in his sights. He pulled the trigger one last time, the plasma round going straight through the center of its eyes. Sasuke took a deep breath, and began sighting out any other targets. He wished Tenten were her, she had the highest score with this damn gun.

Sasuke looked around, his magnifier momentarily annoying him before he turned it down a bit. He spotted the others all trying to sneak around the fighting. It was working for the most part, though this annoyed the Master Chief a bit as it did Sasuke. But Naruto's orders had been crystal clear: Hinata gets hurt, you all die. Sasuke figured that they could take him, but after seeing his new suit in action about three or four times, he was willing to bet money that it would be a close fight. Besides, they did have a civilian with them, and they knew that engaging enemies in a pointless battle could only cause them problems later on. And the sheer fact that Naruto ordered them not to attack the Elites only made it worse for them. The Elites had yet to spot them, but they all kept putting them in their line of sight just in case they turned and fired on them.

Once he watched his team get to the safety of the door, stow Hinata away in a safe corner, John pulled his beam rifle off his back, and began to cover him. Sasuke was relieved to know that they were at this part. Just a few more checkpoints and they'd be close to Truth. Nothing was going wrong at all.

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Naruto walked into the dark and dusty room with his eyes darting from corner to corner. The room he was in had been one of his hiding places when he lived down on the lower levels of High Charity, just a few floors above the mist of methane for the Unggoy. He had a few scary memories from this place, but they were nothing but memories now. After he had joined the military ranks of High Charity, he had begun collecting interesting items that were, by human standards, precious. He had also begun making his own weapons. He had used them at one point early on, but after a few months, he either sold them, or placed them in storage.

He found a large box made from wood. He brushed the dust off of the top of it, and smiled. The hiss of gasses sounded as he pulled his helmet off. He shook his head while blinking away some of his hair

that was in his eyes. He placed the helmet down on the ground beside the box, and then removed the lid from the crate. He peered inside, and his grin grew.

There was a rustling of metal against metal, and Naruto cursed as he reached into the crate, whipped around, and pulled out a long metal bar. He watched the only way in with narrowed eyes as he reached down to pick up his helmet. It hissed when he put it on, and his HUD revealed a few Jiralhanae trying to get in, but they were too big to do so. _One good thing about being small in body size_, he thought.

Looking around, Naruto's grin grew. He twirled the metal bar in his hands before the tip of it ignited into a long trident blade of white energy. He watched with his inferred vision as the three Jiralhanae looked back at each other, shouting that someone was in here. Naruto wondered just how stupid they really were. This was his territory. Nothing was small enough to get in here, and there was also the fact that he had spent his whole life learning how to get through dead ends.

Naruto threw the weapon at the opening, and listened with a grin to the sounds of screaming as his weapon went through two of them before being lodged into the heart of the third. There were three thumps followed by a loud bang, telling him that one had shot off a single round. Naruto looked around, searching for anymore signatures that weren't friendly. He found none.

Smiling happily, he walked out through the tiny passage, and found the three dead Jiralhanae. They were scouts, nothing more than simple, mindless, scouts that had no idea what they were up against. Still, an enemy was an enemy, and Naruto was more than happy to take out anything or anyone that dared threaten his people, Sangheili or Shinobi.

The wall in front of him exploded, and he stared at the gaping hole with hateful eyes. Lekgolo stood behind their shields, growling at him in their own language, flexing their hands, ready to tear him apart, and a few looking nervously to their partners. Behind them was a school of Unggoy, for once behind the main line, but they were sporting plasma turrets. Not exactly the best position, but he'd give them credit for trying. Behind them were hundreds of Jiralhanae, all of them hefting brute launchers. A few of them had jump packs, but they still had no idea on how pissed he was currently. Behind them, on the ledge, were the twenty, Kig-Yar, armed with beam rifles and supreme gauntlet shields. Above them all, acting like a God, was Minashu, wearing the red crystal.

Naruto hissed as the pain began to hit him. Minashu couldn't be the only one with a crystal. The closer the Jiralhanaes got to him, the stronger the pain became. He canceled the speaker system on his helmet, and let lose a painful howl as the crystals were revealed to him. Everyone wore one of them. He was trapped, and he couldn't move.

Minashu released an authority bark as he leapt down in front of Naruto. Naruto collapsed to the ground, the crystal quickly causing him more pain than what he could handle. His sane mind was destroyed, replaced with the will to live. His mind screamed for him to run, but his body wouldn't respond. If he moved his left leg, his head jerked

instead. Minashu placed a massive foot on his chest, and slowly applied pressure to it. His armor was tough, but Minashu was far stronger than what his armor could take. It soon began to dent in, and Naruto began screaming even more.

"You're weak, so easy to break." He chided. Naruto just continued to scream as the crystal pounded away on his whole body. He felt like he was on fire. Minashu raised his massive hammer above his head, a grin appearing on his lips as he did. "You have caused my kind a great deal of pain, Uzumaki." His grin grew as he began to swing it. "Nowâ€¦ DIE!" He swung the hammer. Naruto's eyes widened before he suddenly threw a transparent arm at a Lekgolo, grabbed it by the knee, and pulled himself out from under Minashu's foot. His hammer slammed down where his head was. Minashu swore as he watched Naruto stand up, jump over the Lekgolo, and onto a rafter above them. Naruto quickly vanished from sight. "What the hell!"

Naruto rolled around the pillar he was taking cover behind, gripped his head, and blinked away the tears that had formed from his pain. _The painâ€¦ It's gone? _

"_**I'm blocking the effects of the crystal for you." **_

"Kyuubi," Naruto whispered, stunned by his help. Naruto growled as he ran around the pillar, and jumped down on several Kig-Yar that had been trying to find him.

"_**Now go, human, and KILL THEM!" **_

(This is War by Ill Nino was used for this part of the fight)

Naruto grinned as he dropped down in front of the stunned Kig-Yar. He punched the first one in the chest, shattering its weak armor, and destroying its ribs, making it bleed into its lung. The blood drowned the poor Kig-Yar, and he died a painful death while gasping for air. Naruto spun around, and kicked one in the head, snapping its head clean off as its head twisted around too fast for its body to follow. The other two, Kig-Yar were already too far away from him, and he could only growl in anger as he watched the Lekgolo level their fuel rods on him. They fired. Naruto jumped away, rolling when he hit the ground, and broke into a fast run as the air was suddenly filled with auto grenades, blobs of plasma, and crystal shards. Naruto took cover behind another pillar, and sighed.

_This is no good. _Naruto looked up at the top corner of his HUD, and stared at the blinking words: waiting for password. He growled. Explosions sounded from behind, and Naruto watched a large crack appear in the hard metal of the pillar. He growled angrily as it began to fall apart. A few more shoots, and the pillar came apart. Chunks of cherry red metal came down on him, and crushed him. Minashu grinned. He motioned for Unggoy to remove the metal. As soon as they got close to it, a red explosion shoved them all back, and Naruto stood up, covered in the red holy light of Kyuubi's intense power. "There is no God."

A series of hisses, clanks, and beeps sounded as his suit began to glow red. Sections of his armor parted, revealing two or three red glowing orbs, like angry eyes. His shoulder blades parted, expanded, and then reconnected back to where they had been. His helmet's fins moved, fanned out a bit, and then returned to normal. His two angry

eyes began to glowing blood red before changing to sky blue. Naruto dropped down to all fours, and let loose an angry roar as the two rods on his back wiggled before igniting into two long blades. His fingers also grew long white energy blades, and Naruto grinned happily as his three tails swished back and forth happily, ready to kill. At the top corner of his HUD, a countdown timer appeared. 30:00 minutes until his suit ran out of a power.

Minashu took a step back as Naruto stood up, looking over his claw blades. He couldn't understand how he was immune to the crystal now.

His forces stood their ground, some screaming in fear as they began running for their lives, others standing their ground and firing at him. Naruto dropped a small glowing device just as the auto grenades, crystal shards, and slammed into him. Smoke obscured him from view. They all hit him dead on, and there was no way he could have lived through that. The smoke faded, and Naruto was unharmed. Around him was a protective barrier that rippled like water with each new round slamming into it. Minashu stared at it. How long had he had items like this? Where had they come from?

Naruto gave them the finger. He dropped back down to all four, roared again, and then charged them.

Naruto appeared in front of a stunned Jiralhanae, laughed at him, and drove his claws through his heart. He began to fall forward, but Naruto stuffed one of their own grenades into his belly, and kicked him into a horde of his people. Three more Jiralhanaes fell from their blast of shrapnel and heat. The Unggoy began to scurry away, and Naruto watched them get turned around by Minashu when he gave them an angry bark. They quickly turned around, and, even though it was well against their will, barked at Naruto as they opened fire with crazy zeal, and fire in their eyes. Naruto grinned.

His claw blades retracted, the two blades on his back sizzled away. He stood up, ran, and then took cover behind a slab of metal that had fallen from the roof. He quickly stood back, ran, and vanished like the mist as his armors' AC kicked on. Minashu barked out orders to the Lekgolo, and they all gave out a collective squeal and the eel colonies roared angrily while firing at where they thought Naruto might be. The Lekgolo stopped firing, followed quickly by the Kig-Yar and Unggoy. The Jiralhanae stopped last. Smoke and debris covered the area, making a good chaff field to prevent them from seeing Naruto.

A Lekgolo screamed in pain, before it was silenced by having its shield arm torn off. Naruto appeared in front of it with his back up against its chest. The shield arm fell to the ground with a clank. Naruto gripped his fuel rod arm as it powered up on impulse, and aimed it at a cluster of stunned Jiralhanae. It fired without thinking, and destroyed the cluster of Jiralhanae. Naruto watched the green cloud of radiation melt away their bodies before fading away. He tore the arm off with a grunt. The limb fell to the ground twitching. Naruto spun around, grabbed the bar of metal on his back, and cut the creature in half at the exposed abdomen. It fell backwards in two pieces.

Naruto looked to his left, his eyes widening as the three pairings of Lekgolo took aim at him. They fired. Naruto grabbed the down shield,

and took cover behind it. He skidded backwards as they continued to fire on the shield. It slowly began to heat up, changing from its dark blue color to a cherry red. Naruto growled, jumped back with the shield in hand, and threw like a disc at the approaching threat. Three Lekgolo hunkered behind their shields, protecting them from the disc shield, while two were cut down from the surprise attack. The shield stopped in front of one of them, and it roared angrily at him.

Naruto promptly gave it the finger before vanishing in a cloud of a smoke left by the destruction of the weapon. The small army opened fire again, this time aiming wherever they wanted to. Unggoy shot each other out of fear. Kig-Yar killed Jiralhanae, thinking he was behind them. Jiralhanae targeted Lekgolo with their brute launchers. Lekgoloâ€| well they just looked around, talking to each other.

Naruto smiled where he was hiding. He had gone back to his hiding spot where the box had been. On his back was a long, massive sword with the edge of the blade removed, replaced by two small holes. There was no guard, but the hilt was two feet long. The blade itself was nearly five feet long with half a foot width. On his hips were two katanas, designed the same as the sword on the back, but these had a single hollow oval for a guard. In his hand was a long metal bar with a soccer ball size slab of metal with a hole at the end of it. He pressed the button on it while checking his time. 28:09. He could do this.

The end ignited into a large scythe, and he quickly became visible. The enemy turned to face, fired at him, and barked out orders to others around them that had yet to see him. The Lekgolo charged their weapons, roared to each other, then turned on the Jiralhanae, and fired. Plasma washed over large clusters of Jiralhanae, killing them. Naruto stood with his back against a slab of metal, and watched as the Lekgolo turned on the Brutes. Naruto was shocked by it. The Jiralhanae numbers were cut in half because of this, and because they were also stunned by this. Unggoy turned to run, but were shot by Kig-Yar who assumed they were traitors. Unggoy then quickly began shooting at the Kig-Yar in retaliation as Naruto came running out from behind his cover, the scythe behind his back while ignited.

The Unggoy ran behind the hunkered down Lekgolo, returning fire only when they felt safe enough to. They opened fire a lot more as Naruto rushed past them, some cheering for him as though he was a hero.

A single Jiralhanae stood before him, arm down, face presented, and Naruto slashed him in half without breaking stride. The Lekgolo continued to fire, this time aiming at the Kig-Yar that, were trying to snipe Naruto. Kig-Yar began running away, their shields removed, and their backs to the enemy. Unggoy with needlers opened fire, and took them out, crying for joy. Naruto became a speeding blur (not shinobi speeds) slashing anything that got in his way apart.

Minashu roared angrily as Naruto jumped up to him, his scythe sputtering as blood sizzled on the energy blade. Naruto swung the weapon for his neck when he landed down in front of him, but the weapon ran out of energy, and only smacked his face to the side. Minashu gripped the weapon, gave it a yank, and relieved Naruto of it. He tossed it into the chasm bellow with one hand, and punched Naruto in the stomach with the other. Naruto doubled over from the

force of the punch, but regained his senses quickly. He head butted him in the face, which only made the Jiralhanae chieftain reel back, not out of pain, but just from the force of the blow. Naruto hit the ground, and punched Minashu in the face, his head spinning with the blow before he slipped off the edge. Minashu reached out, grabbed Naruto by the ankle as he fell, and pulled him down with him. Naruto fell down into the chasm with him.

As the two fell, they continued to struggle for dominance. Naruto punched him across the face, and Minashu brought both hands down for a hammer blow. Naruto was sent flying down a bit faster and towards the wall. At the last second, Naruto corrected his fall, braced for the impact, and jumped from the wall when he was close enough. Minashu watched with hateful eyes as Naruto slammed a hard kick into his stomach. Minashu grabbed Naruto's foot, and tossed him towards the ground as a Phantom appeared above him. Its Gravlift activated, and pulled him up into the safety of the ship.

Naruto cursed as he approached another wall. He quickly pulled the massive sword off of his back, ignited the tiny blade that was between the edges of the sword, and drove it into the wall when he hit it. Naruto grunted as he fought to keep his grip on the large weapon as he slowly slowed down. When he came to a complete stop, he could only glare at the methane mist that was just a few feet beneath him. He shook his head before the hum of anti-gravity pods got his attention. He turned, and found Minashu riding on top of a Phantom with a fuel rod. Naruto jumped from the wall, the sword coming with him as Minashu began firing.

Naruto tossed a small glowing device in front of him, and a bubble appeared in between them. Minashu stared at it for a moment before jumping back as it bounced onto the surface of the ship. Naruto rolled into the barrier as a section of it opened up for him. Minashu fired once at the barrier, and watched it just exploded on the surface, showing no damage to it. Naruto knelt down to the device, and picked it up, clicking a button as he did. It shrank, and then the barrier vanished from view. Naruto prepared to pocket it as the Phantom began to fly up into the higher levels of the place. As it did, Naruto heard a loud scream sound from behind him. There, in a dark corner of High Charity, was Hinata surrounded by the marines, ODSs, and Spartans. Naruto thumbed the device, and threw it at them. This cost him of course. Minashu used this time to tackle him as the ship pitched forward, heading straight for the Sangheili that were fighting in a bio garden.

A plasma mortar began hammering away on the ship from underneath, and it turned upside down. Naruto and Minashu were thrown to the ground hard. Naruto got to his feet first, gripped the hilt of the massive blade tightly while Minashu pulled his hammer back out. Naruto looked around him. Trees, a small stream, weapon crates, Unggoy working with Lekgolo and Sangheili, Jiralhanae working with Kig-Yar and Yamane. The Phantom exploded into a million pieces, raining down debris around them.

Sangheili that once stood stunned by the sight of Naruto falling from the sky quickly began fighting again with renewed vigor. The Unggoy began fighting again, this time coming out of cover rather than just firing blind. Lekgolo pairs began charging Jiralhanae teams, beating them down with their shields, crushing them into nothing but piles of armor, bone, and flesh. The Spartan, ODSs, and marines all watched

in awe.

Naruto charged Minashu, his weapon at his side and dragging along the ground. Minashu did the same; his weapon held high above his head as prepared to deliver a knockout blow. They swung at the same time. Their weapons canceled out each other's blows. Naruto growled in annoyance at being shown up by a Jiralhanae. Minashu glared hatefully at Naruto for being stopped by a human. Naruto kicked him in the chest, and sent him skidding backwards as he activated his holy powers again, this time going to four-tails. (He doesn't lose control at this stage)

(Song ends)

(Polyamorous by Breaking Benjamin is played for this fight)

His holy powers engulfed the sword, and Naruto grinned from inside his helmet while the Sangheili began picking off new arrivals. Naruto casted a quick glance up to Hinata, and growled. He knew what the Sangheili would do as soon as they killed all of the Jiralhanae and Kig-Yar and Yamane. They would stay here, guard this area as their own, and let nothing pass. There would be no questioning when they saw Hinata and the others. They would just simply kill them.

He closed his eyes. "Toto," Naruto got the Sangheili's attention. This one was dressed in red armor, and blinked as he looked over at Naruto as he jumped beside him, evading Minashu's hammer. "The female that were captured is being escorted out of here by the Demons. Let them pass when we have cleared this area of these bastards. Let the humans pass, for some are from my world. Pass this along through encrypted channels to the other Sangheili. If any of them die by a Sangheili's hands, know that I will kill them for committing genocide on my people." Toto nodded, and quickly began passing along the message as Naruto charged Minashu.

Minashu swung his hammer. Naruto jumped behind him before it struck the ground. A shockwave spread out, throwing earth and metal around as it spread further out, but grew weaker with each foot gained. Naruto braced for the impact, but it was nothing when it reached him. A ten foot range with its shockwave, affect. Naruto could work with this.

Minashu spun around just as Naruto prepared to drive the sword through his throat, a place where the armor was weakest. Minashu spun around the blade, glaring at it as he did, and backhanded Naruto across the face, sending him flipping backwards onto the ground. Naruto was quick to get to his feet, and sent a kick into his jaw. Minashu took the attack as though it was nothing, and Naruto cursed while jumping back. His armor changed from red to white instantly, and he grinned. He placed the sword on his back, and activated his claws, his back mounted blades, the two sheaths hidden blades, his elbow blades, and foot blades.

He dropped to all fours, growling angrily at the annoyed looking Jiralhanae that stood like a God before him. Naruto rushed him with all of his speed he could muster. Minashu brought the hammer down. Naruto jumped above the shockwave. He collided with him, his blade claws digging into his chest. His blood sizzled on the tiny six inch long claws as they began slowly moving down his body, cutting into his flesh with great ease. Minashu cried in pain, and punched Naruto

away. He skidded to a stop, and then rushed back towards him. Minashu swung his hammer like a bat, and knocked Naruto up onto the ledge above them.

Naruto came crashing down beside a wounded Kig-Yar. It pulled its plasma pistol out, took aim, and Naruto grabbed it by the wrist, twisting the weapon up to its beak as it pulled the trigger. Its face exploded into a spray of melted flesh, charred bone, and crisp dark black blood. Naruto got to his feet, looked out to the other ledge, and noticed the barrier falling down around Hinata and the others.

John gave him a single nod of approval, which Naruto returned with a glare. He hated him, even if he did help save his people.

Minashu's loud roar of angrily got him back on track. Naruto barely had time to react to the hammer that almost took his head off. He ducked under it, cursing as he felt his ribs grind against the other. Yep, he had broken ribs. A few more seconds and he'd be back to normal. He stood up, and punched Minashu in the stomach with his blades. The angry Jiralhanae chieftain roared in pain before grabbing hold of his neck, and throwing him through the doors as they parted. Two Kig-Yars suffered beheadings from his blades as he crashed on his back, sliding until he hit a stunned Lekgolo.

Naruto got to his feet, looked the Lekgolo, then back to Minashu as he charged in, hammer held high. The Lekgolo pair raised their fuel rods, took aim, and fired. Minashu jumped to the side, avoiding the blast. They charged their weapons. Naruto rushed him, his claws sticking together, ready to deliver a killing blow. Minashu swung the hammer. Naruto deactivated his knee and foot blades as he dropped to his knees, and skidded under the wide swing. He stabbed him once in both legs, making him howl in pain before Naruto punched him in the jaw. Minashu grabbed his wrist, applied pressure, and then twisted it. Naruto's arm broke, and the armor broke apart, leaving that arm without weapons from the wrist down to hand. He then promptly slammed Naruto into the wall behind them, leaving his back turned to the Lekgolo pair.

Bad move.

They opened fire, hitting him square in the back. His advanced armor and shields drained instantly, and he was lucky that he at least had some distance between them, or he'd be nothing but vapor now. His back armor was gone, melted away, leaving his now hairless and burned back burning on the cherry red metal. As he gave out another angry roar, he tossed Naruto at them. Naruto slammed into the two, momentarily taking them down to the ground. Naruto was quick to get to his feet, the Lekgolo pair quickly doing the same.

Naruto rushed him. Minashu jumped over him, and ran. Naruto skidded to a stop, turned back to face the humans, and then looked at the Lekgolo pair. He knew they could understand him. "I do not know your names, but know that there are a group of humans leading my mate to safety. If you stand in their way, and I find out you did not let them pass, I will kill you." He made sure his four-tails slashed a four X slash into the wall behind him, making it look like a star. They looked at each other for a moment. Did they understand him and his threat?

"They shall pass." One of them spoke. Naruto nodded, somewhat relieved that Hinata would be okay.

Without a second thought, he began running after Minashu. He wouldn't get far from him. He looked up at the corner of his HUD where the timer was. 19:59. He cursed. He was wasting too much time trying to kill him like this. He took a deep breath. He needed to finish this quickly so he could help the other Sangheili teams that were screaming for help. Even the mightiest of Sangheili would demand help when faced with superior numbers. They believed in honor, were steadfast, and would die if asked to, but that did not mean they would stay and die over something incredible stupid.

He could reach him. He had to reach. He could almost hear the cries of his people screaming for revenge. _Minashu, I will kill you for what you've done to them! _

(Song Ends)

(-)

Minashu crept into the dark corners of a bridge, all the while trying to avoid the Sangheili that took aim at the Jiralhanae forces that were pushing them back. He had to get to a ship. If he couldn't beat him here, he'd just beat him in space, or better yet, destroy the people he loved from space. High Charity was lost anyways. All of the council members had been moved, killed, and imprisoned. He was going to follow through with Tartarus's plan to kill all of the Sangheili. At least the main threat had been taken care of, now all that remained was Naruto. Besides Thel Vadamee, the Arbiter, Naruto possessed a unique influence over a large majority of the Sangheili. If he could take him out, they'd fall apart.

He crept into a large pathway, cursing as he did. He was losing blood fast. He had to get away before-

"MINASHU!" Minashu spun around just in time to jump back as Naruto came crashing down in front of him.

(Blow me Away by Breaking Benjamin was used for this fight)

Sangheili turned, took aim, but held their fire as they spotted Naruto with the massive sword on his shoulder while he charged Minashu. Naruto swung his sword. Minashu jumped back. Naruto cursed, raised the sword, and threw it at him. It flew past him, sticking into a wall beside a Lekgolo pair. The Lekgolo stared at the weapon for a moment before roaring at Minashu, screaming for his blood as well, just as the Sangheili and Unggoy did. Naruto roared at them as a few fired; making them think twice instantly. Unggoy took cover behind Lekgolo out of fear. Lekgolo hunkered down behind their shields. Sangheili looked at each other before nodding.

Naruto grinned as Minashu began running away. More and more Jiralhanae were appearing behind Naruto, a few were shot in the back by John and the other Spartans. Naruto didn't think about telling the Sangheili that if they touched any of the humans, he'd kill them, but when he looked back at the humans, one of them nodded, and he wasn't certain if it was a good thing or bad. He didn't have time to check it out.

Minashu ran past the angry Lekgolo pair as they began fighting the rushing Jiralhanaes. Unggoy cleared a path for the running chieftain as Naruto gave chase. The doors parted when he got in proximity, and two Jiralhanae rushed past him, attacking the Unggoy, Lekgolo, and Sangheili from behind. Naruto cut through one of them as he continued to chase down Minashu. When he came to stop, Minashu turned around, his hammer in hand, and smacked Naruto in the side with it as he dropped down on him. Naruto crashed into a floating statue of metal with white light beneath it.

Naruto growled as he looked around. He knew this place well. Xedrael had brought him here several times in the past. They were fighting in the Mausoleum of the Arbiter. Naruto looked down at Minashu as he raised his hammer above his head.

The doors from all around opened up. Naruto's motion detector went off big time. Hundreds of enemies and allies appeared. Sangheili took the top floor, all of them hefting carbines, fuel rods, and energy swords while a single Lekgolo pair appeared beneath them, roaring with anger as Jiralhanaes began spilling out from behind Naruto. Minashu roared to all of them, and they returned it. Naruto looked over at the Sangheili as they prepared to fight. Naruto's four-tails swayed back and forth before he flung his head back, and roared loudly, getting the Sangheili and Lekgolo's attention. The Sangheili roared as well. The Lekgolo pair gave out a roar of approval as well.

This was their final stand. Sangheili and another Lekgolo appeared from behind Minashu, and they roared as well. Behind them, just as the door closed, Naruto saw the humans. They were all watching him. John forced the doors open before they closed, and gave him a nod as he stood back, wanting to watch this fight play out.

Without a second thought, Naruto lunged at Minashu, his massive sword held over his head. Minashu swung his hammer at the same time as Naruto did, and they stopped each other's attacks. Both growled in annoyance before Naruto kicked him in the face and jumped away. Minashu roared angrily at Naruto as he began running towards him. Fire erupted around them. A Lekgolo pair had been killed by a squad of Jiralhanae hefting human rocket weapons. They were in the middle of reloading when they were cut down by a black armored Sangheili warrior that was using an energy sword. It was Raul.

Naruto jumped back as Minashu tried to smash him with his hammer. Raul ran up to the silver Sangheili warriors to aid them, and stay far away from Naruto's fight with Minashu.

A Brute rushed Naruto from behind, but was cut down when Naruto spun around, using the oversized sword to cleave him in half. Minashu roared out orders to the Jiralhanae, forcing them to refocus on the Sangheili and Lekgolo. Naruto rushed Minashu as he did this, and speared him through the chest. At the last second however, Minashu had moved so it would just pierce his lung, rather than his heart. He backhanded Naruto away, pulled the sword free from his chest, and hurled it towards him. Naruto rolled to the side, avoid the attack, and gripped the handles of his katana set. He pulled them out in a flash, leaving a thin vapor trail from the heat of the weapons. Minashu shook his head.

"How many blades do you have?" Naruto just grinned at him while checking his HUD.

15:45.

There wasn't much time left.

Minashu rushed him, jumping from side to side in case Naruto pulled out a throw able weapon at him. Naruto crossed the sword, and rushed him as well. Minashu blocked his first strike, but was stabbed by the second blade. Naruto dug it deeper into his gut before Minashu backhanded him again. Minashu tore the blade from his body, grasping the wound before Naruto came rushing back at him. He tackled him to the ground, punched him in the stab wound, and grinned as he raised his right arm, extending the three wolverine claws from their hiding places. He threw a punch at his face, but missed. Minashu jerked up, head butting Naruto in the face. It shook him a bit, and Minashu gripped him by the head to throw him away. Naruto skidded to a stop, stood up, and rushed him again. Minashu watched three Narutos come running at him.

He was losing too much blood too fast. He had to end this, or at least run away. He wasn't stupid. He believed in honor, but unlike the Sangheili, he also believed in living. You couldn't take honor with you to the grave. Besides, the Jiralhanaes that had come to help him were all dead now. It was just him.

He growled as he jumped back, reached forward, grabbed Naruto by his head, and threw him at the statue for the sacred armor of the Arbiter. It toppled over, losing its balance from the sudden hit. It crashed to the ground, and Minashu ran for the white light. He knew that below him was nothing but open space, but he had an idea. He pressed a button on his armor, and it began beeping as he ran. Sluggish in speed, Naruto stood up, and watched as Minashu hurled a spike grenade at him. He jumped away as it exploded where he had been, and watched as Minashu plummeted into the white light.

The Sangheili stood stunned. Naruto cursed. The Lekgolo pair checked over their fallen brethren.

(Song ends)

The door moved. Naruto cursed again. The humans, he had to move them or they'd be killed. As the door parted, he saw none of them. They were hiding. He looked to the Sangheili warriors, hoping for help. Raukee nodded approvingly as the Sangheili began to leave. He remained behind, giving Naruto a serious look.

Naruto sighed. He obviously knew, and wanted to talk to him about it. He closed his eyes. "Salvation through damnation," he whispered. His armor changed back to black, and he removed his helmet. "I guess word got around pretty quickly." He mumbled. Raul could only nod. "Listenâ€¦ for what it's worth; a few of them are my people as well. You know I've been fighting for them. That's why I became a part of the military." Raul nodded happily. He had figured as such. "Listen; let me talk to them, get the female and my people out of here, some place safe. I can't lose them. Not now. I need them. I know the truth because of the female. I will not see her harmed."

"Speak to them. For we may need their help. You're people's help."

Naruto nodded slowly. They knew the Demon was part of the group. "But know this, Uzumakiee. The Sangheili have now resigned from the Covenant. So long as you are part of it, we will not aid you."

"Then I resign as well. I will help only those who saved me. The Sangheili raised me, protected me, and trained me. I will not abandon them. But Truth must be stopped as well. He must pay for his crimes. He ordered the attack on my world. I will not let him live after causing me pain and giving me hope with one hand while blinding me with the other."

"Very well, Uzumaki. We are preparing to head down to the ring to pick up some survivors that have eluded the Jiralhanae's assassination attempts. Meet us on the _Shadow of Intent_ if you intend to join us. All of the Sangheili are returning with us. We shall leave none behind him." Raukee left, leaving Naruto alone in the center of the chamber. He sighed as he heard the footsteps of the humans behind him.

Life was full of mysterious. He turned to face them, surprised to see that they were out in the open like this. John gave him a serious look, if you could call it that anyways, from behind his helmet. He took a deep breath before speaking. "We picked up a transmission from the ring. More of your people are alive, and are under fire on the ring from the Flood. I need to take out Truth, stop him from activating the rings. I can't be in two places at once, so I'm sending them with you to the ring world to find your people, take out the threat, and get them all to safety. Will you please help us?"

(-)

Neji swore as they all regrouped. Yugito had been found, removed from the mountain with the other survivors, but now, at the base of the mountain, did they realize how fruitless it was. They couldn't hold out against such an armada of Flood. They were everywhere, some holding weapons, other just running and screaming at them with flailing arms. Neji swore though. All of his training had been on how to combat Brutes, Elites, Grunts, and Jackals, not a parasite that could infect anyone that it could grab hold of. Plus, he was killing parts of his own family as they were turned.

"I'm out of ammo!" Hanabi cried as he raised her rifle to smack a Flood infected human in the head. It went down, but was quick to get back up. "Neji, we can't hold this position! We need to leave!"

"Negative!"

A dust cloud appeared. The screams of thunder and falling debris momentarily drowned out by the sudden appearance of these odd slender pods. The hiss of gasses soon sounded, and a white light poured out from the cracks just before it was kicked loose. Out popped Sasuke, hefting a plasma rifle in each hand. Konohamaru appeared too, followed by Haku, Deidara, Konan, Hidan, and Matsuri. Then out of the other pods, Elites shot out, momentarily shaken by the force of the drop. Neji took aim at them, but Sasuke jerked the gun into the air.

"They're on our side." The last pod shot open, Naruto walked out.

"They're here to help us."

Neji took one look at Sasuke, shook his head, and raised his rifle. "I hope you got a good explanation for this, supposing we live through this." Sasuke just laughed at him as he began opening fire. The Elites quickly began mowing down the enemy while Naruto watched a Cruiser appear in the distance.

Minashuâ€| I know you're alive, and I will kill you. With that, he too began cutting down the enemy, his plasma weapon screaming to life. "There is no God!"

14. Chapter 14

Chapter 14

Rauke stared at Naruto in disbelief; his mandibles slacked as though his jaw was dropped in complete shock. Naruto had a brow arched at his facial expression, tilted his head, and shook his head after a few seconds of staring at it. For once, Naruto wasn't certain if the look was friendly or not, but he honestly didn't care at the moment. No. For once he was rather enjoying life. He had always enjoyed life to the fullest, but right now, he was beyond happy because beside him was his 'mate', Hinata. She honestly, for the most part, seemed ratherâ€| cool with the fact that she, along with the Spartans, ODSs, and Marines, now tailing behind her with their guns gripped tightly, were onboard a Covenant Cruiser. Years of fighting had made the ODS and Marine, Tucker V. Chance and Lenard W. Chester, had made them not trust the Sangheili around them, and they were fighting the urge to just shoot them.

So, as Rauke continued to stare at Naruto, wondering if this was just a joke or not, he simply had to just point his rifle at the Demons. Naruto quickly grabbed his arm, twisted it back, and glared at him while Hinata began giving the others a harsh glare. Naruto had warned her that if she didn't show an obedience and restraint while in the presence of a 'greater race' and dominance to a 'lesser race' they know she wasn't his mate. They quickly became submissive. Sasuke muttered a low curse as they dodged the plasma round, so to speak.

Naruto released his hold on his arm, and growled at the blue armored Sangheili that still had their weapons drawn on them. They gave him a look of confusion before Naruto rushed up to the closest one, grabbed his arm, twisted it, and then backhanded him away. He gave the others a harsh look, wanting to know which one he had to beat down next. The blue Sangheili on the ground was holding his wrist, hissing in pain. They quickly lowered their weapons, turned around, and left. Rauke and Naruto along with two blue Sangheili remained with the humans, and they were all staring at him with awe.

Naruto growled angrily at them. "They have no courage." He spat. Rauke nodded, though he knew that none of them would try to fight him anyways. Naruto ran a hand through his hair, cracked his neck, and turned to face the humans. "I will show you to the armory." Though Naruto hadn't really spoken in proper human tongue since his last encounter with Yugito, and since he rarely ever spoke it anyways, he had it down pretty good. Odd that Sasuke hadn't noticed he had problems speaking English, but he didn't care. Naruto then

turned to Raukee, and spoke in his language. "Have my mate taken to my quarters. Once we have beaten back the fools, I shall bed her." Raukee nodded, barked out orders to the two remaining blue armored Sangheili to take her to his room. They quickly did so.

As soon as Raukee left, Naruto breathed a sigh of relief. He then led the others to the armory as _Shadow of Intent_ began to leave. Their mission was to get to Delta Halo, find the distress signal that a squad of Spartans had set off, aid them, and rescue their people. Naruto gave Sasuke his full cooperation, and promised that the Sangheili would aid them when they learned his people were in trouble. Naruto had already explained the situation to Raukee, but he was willing to bet money that the Sangheili wasn't very happy about this right now.

Naruto took a deep breath, turned to face the humans, and glared at them. Sasuke returned the glare with one of his own before he put his helmet back on. The other Spartan III's quickly did the same while the ODS'T's shook their heads. Naruto walked between them, motioning for them to follow him. Sasuke nodded to them. Naruto led them through corridors, hallways, and odd twists and turns before Naruto walked into a room.

Plasma rifles, carbines, plasma pistols, plasma grenades, fuel rods, needlers, and beam rifles lines the walls. Naruto's swords and scythe were sitting on a small rack beside several energy swords. The ODS'Ts checked their weapons over, unsure of how to read them before Naruto took them, placed them in a large box that suddenly hissed closed, and motioned for them to get new weapons. They quickly did. Naruto switched out his swords with ones that had full charges. When they finished getting stocked up, Naruto lead them to the launch pods.

"Get in and shut up. We'll be dropping in ten minutes." He informed them. A few of the ODS'Ts started screaming in joy as they jumped inside. Once everyone was in, the pods closed. Naruto remained outside of his, waiting for the strike team to appear. He closed his eyes as footsteps sounded behind him. "This is right." Raul came to a stop. Naruto turned to face him, and smiled. Ahriel was behind him, along with Rauk, nodding approvingly. Three more Sangheili were behind them.

Zorro, the Sangheili that was said to be just a vicious in battle as Shirley, a former Arbiter. He used two energy swords, and hated guns with a passion. Gin, the Sangheili that never messed with any weapon you gave him. No matter how far away the target was, he could hit them. Raiden, the Sangheili that was said to be quicker than lightning. Naruto wouldn't put it past him to be that fast. He had seen him just disappear several times, leaving no trace at all.

"I did not say anything, but I understand why you're doing this. I will not stop you." Raukee told him calmly. Naruto smiled happily at that. "But even if they are your people, I fail to see why you'd do this for them." Naruto's face fell. He'd been asking himself the same question. Raukee took a step forward. "They hurt you, tried to kill you for being something beyond their understandings. Why fight for them?"

Naruto looked back at his pod. "Answers," he whispered. "I want answers from the ones who hurt me if they're still alive. I'm doing

this because I want to know why they couldn't accept my fathers' wishes. That's all. After this, I want nothing to do with them. But we will leave them alone. I will have nothing to do with them. Once they are safe, I'll come live with Thel on Sanghelios at the Vadam Keep, supposing it's not destroyed and he's not dead."

"And what of the female?"

Naruto stopped as he got one foot in. He looked down at his left hand where his helmet was. _She showed me the truth. She at least has my thanks. But after thisâ€¦ _"I will let her go. She will be free to do what she wishes. If she wishes to stay by my side, I don't care. I honestly think that I am meant to be alone. That's what I read about the history of Jinchuuriki. They are always meant to be alone. No happiness unless in battle. They live alone, always worrying when the next assassin will come to target them."

Ahielee stared at him, watching him slowly put his helmet on. The pod closed, and the two old friends stared at each other sadly. Raukee knew his pain too well. Raukee stared at the closed pod for a number of seconds before closing his eyes. They were years apart, but they could understand each other perfectly. Naruto was lonely, no question about it. He longed for the touch of another of his race, but he would never speak it or show it. Giving her up, was only further proof of this. He wanted what was best for his people, but most importantly, he wanted to be loved by someoneâ€¦ human.

"Mount up. We deploy in a few minutes." He ordered. They all nodded before loading up. Raukee's pod closed up, and the last thing he saw was the ghostly image of Kushina giving him a curt nod. Naruto had put her in the ship, a sign of good faith in the current Shipmaster Chichi's ability, even if he had a girly name.

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Five minutes into the flight, Naruto wondered if he was doing the right thing. They had hurt him, hated him, and tried to kill him. He could just as easily call it off, but he wanted answers. He needed them. He needed to know just why the Kyuubi attacked. He wanted to know why he was chosen out of so many children. He needed to know, even if it hurt him in the end. Whoever was alive would have to answer for these questions, even if they knew nothing of it.

He felt a moment of zero-gee before the pods' supporting artificial gravity kicked in. The pods had a gravity shock absorber to them. Unlike UNSC drop pods, they didn't have rockets to slow them down. Instead, they relied on keeping the person alive by using a type of gravity that kept them in the center of the pod until the pod's hatch was kicked open. These advanced pods also had heat shields to protect them from reentry burns. The coolest feature was actually the gravity part. This odd gravity didn't just keep them stationary, but it also protected their organs from the bone jarring stop. Usually they weren't used for these kinds of drops, but if times called for it, they would be used. There was also a high mortality rate because of these things as well. Regret had 'brilliantly' thought of them after seeing the USNC do the same thing.

Still, Naruto was used to these things. He always enjoyed the ride, namely because it was just him, no communication, no one to bother him, and no one to yell at him for letting his mind wonder while on

duty. Two minutes of heaven for him actually.

Naruto felt the tingle of the dead stop, and the hiss of gasses while the special gravity kicked off before the pod hatch was blown open. Sunlight flooded his vision, and he blinked twice before he jumped out. The first thing he saw was a large mountain. The next thing he saw was a Flood infected human wielding a katana. He jumped forward, slashed it in half, and turned to see who else survived. His strike team survived, so he was happy. The Spartans survived something he was, for the moment, rather happy about. The other humans survived as well, but he really didn't care. What got his attention however, were the hundreds of humans, all of them dressed in rags.

The roar of anti-gravity systems got his attention. He stared at the large Covenant Cruiser above them. It had to be a Jiralhanae ship. There were no other Sangheili ships down here. So why were the Jiralhanae coming down here? They had no reason unless they wanted to just blow Halo to hell. No. They had a reason. They always had a reason. They were only motivated by greed and the lust for more power and rank. They were here for a reason. But with the fighting in space right nowâ€¦

"Raukee, what's with the Cruiser?" Raukee shrugged his shoulders while scouting the area out for more enemies to burn. The strike team took up defensive positions while the humans talked to each other. Naruto stared at them as they all looked them over. Some of them whispered to each other while pointing at them. Others just looked at them with stars in their eyes, believing them to be heroes. The cries of the Flood got his attention, and Naruto cursed as he looked up. Hundreds, maybe even thousands of Flood infected humans came running down the mountain at them. Women, men, children, all of them came running at them with weapons in hand. Some of them weren't even possessed.

"Burn them all!" Raukee shouted as he opened fire. Naruto rushed up the mountain side, his hands gripping the bar of the scythe tightly. Zorro was right beside him. Both of them slashed their way to the top, never breaking stride as they watched the Cruiser lower towards the top of the mountain.

Now it made sense. It was a Flood controlled ship.

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Rtas hated waiting more than he hated the Jiralhanae. He hated it so much that he wanted to strangle something right now. He was a Sangheili of many things. Patience just wasn't really one of them. Oh he had patience, but that was only for waiting for the enemy to show up. He could wait for days just for his target to show up so he could kill them. Waiting for a ride to show up was different though. He felt odd just waiting for a ride to show up for some reason. It just felt so out of place for him. He was use to making others wait for him, not the other way around. Still, he had to admit that it was rather annoying giving what he had to endure at the moment.

He looked over his shoulder, and snorted. Miranda Keys, the female that had been forced into activating the holy rings stood beside Thel, still clutching the Icon tightly in her tiny human hands. The Oracle floated around her and a dark skinned man named Johnson who, for the most part, kept his gaze locked with Thel. The two seemed to

have a small friendship somehow. Thel wasn't talking to him, and neither was Johnson, but the way they looked at each other made it pretty clear that they were thanking the other in silent messages.

Sparks hissed in front of him, and Rtas closed his eyes. This was why they were waiting for their ride. The Scarab had been destroyed when Johnson left it to come help Thel and the Council survivors kill Tartarus and shut the ring down before it could fire. This left them with only one other means of transportation at the moment. A Phantom had appeared to drop in more Jiralhanae troops, unaware that Tartarus was killed, and Rtas had boarded it in order to take it over. The pilot had wittingly crashed it into the building, forcing Thel, Johnson, and Miranda to jump into the ocean below to get to safety. Rtas was covered with scorch marks from his crash, and was also rather annoyed at the fact that when a second one came down, it was shot out of the sky by two idiot blue armored Sangheili warriors. They could have just dropped down on it from above, jacked it, and gotten them all to safety, but no; they had to blow it up.

So now they were all waiting for a ride to come pick them up. They had no heavy weapons to help them take down anything that might come after them, as Rtas, in a moment of total blind anger, destroyed the two Banshees. He was pretty angry with himself, but he was nonetheless, annoyed, composed, and ready to get back on a ship that he could control. The only thing stopping him right now was two things. The first being, that he had no ship. The second being he currently had no way to get up to said ship, and get back into the fight.

He took in a deep breath, controlled his anger, and opened his eyes. The hum of anti-gravity pods quickly got his attention like a woman's voice to a man after being in jail for years on end without seeing a woman. He quickly spotted it, smiled, glanced over at the other Sangheili, and then to the humans. He could see the others standing near the water's edge, some whispering to the others about something he'd rather not know, while others just glared at them.

A Covenant Cruiser appeared, and his eyes widened. A plasma sword wouldn't reach that. A plasma pistol wouldn't even make its shields spring up. And a needler round sure as hell wouldn't reach it. The only thing they could do was pray that it was a Sangheili controlled ship, or they were dead.

A Phantom flew out of the hanger bay, and he breathed a sigh of relief. If it was a Jiralhanae controlled ship, he could jack the Phantom, pick up his forces here, head up to the ship, take it by force, and start killing the idiot Jiralhanae that made a mockery of him along with that big hairy bastard Minashu.

The Phantom nosed up, slowed down, and dropped its ramp, revealing Chichi, the red armored Sangheili in the aft of the ship. He gave him a curt nod as everyone began to walk in, or in the Oracles' case, float in. Rtas walked up to the pilot, placed a hand on his shoulder, and nodded his thanks as he took off towards the sky. They flew up towards the ship at high speeds. Rtas seemed to be grinning as they did.

"What is the status of the fleet?" Thel asked. Chichi smiled at him, or at least that's what it looked like to Johnson.

"Our forces are winning, but we must head to where Uzumaki is, to help him defend his people." Rtas turned around, his eyes wide with shock. He was slightly alarmed to hear that more of his people were alive at the moment than he was that the pilot had forgotten to enable all safety protocols. Had he seen this, he might have beaten the Sangheili down, stripped him of his rank, and killed him for his arrogance. Chichi continued though, showing his shock as well. "He has teamed up with several of the humans that the Jiralhanae captured, and are holding tight until we can return to pick them up. They are holding their own against the Flood." Rtas closed his eyes. He quietly walked up to Chichi, opened his eyes, and then punched him in the face, knocking him to the ground after launching him five feet in the air.

"You fool! You should have just picked them up first! If any of them are dead when we return, I will have your head!" He hissed angrily. Thel glared at Chichi as well. "Get us to them right now! I want to pick them up right now! The Flood is not to be trifled with."

The ship docked smoothly. The ramps opened, and Rtas was the first out. He began screaming orders at the crew as they lazily moved around to check the ship out. He screamed for them to get ready for battle while heading to the bridge of his ship now. Thel remained behind with the humans as the pilot remained sitting. It would take them only ten minutes to reach them at max speeds. There was no point in getting out. Five strike teams boarded their Phantom and two more as they prepared to help out.

Thel looked Johnson over as he stole a new beam rifle from a black armored Sangheili. He almost laughed at it when the team leader shook his head and motioned to Thel. It was clear that they all thought the humans were under Thel's protection, which they probably were now.

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Naruto was slammed to the ground as a Flood infected human tackled him to the ground from behind. He rolled over to his back, grabbed the face of the creature, and threw him away. The body was stabbed by a large rock, and died almost instantly. Naruto jumped to his feet, growled something out, and looked around. Zorro was manhandling eight infected humans and holding two of nine infected humans with one hand. One was missing an arm while the other was intact. The one with one arm kicked him in the back of the leg. Zorro glanced back at Naruto, and pleaded to kill him. Naruto nodded, and watched him throw them both over the edge of the mountain they were in.

Naruto was gripped from behind, and he growled as he kicked the human away. Humans were working with the Flood. More importantly, these people were his own. Why were they helping the Flood? What could they gain from working with the parasite?

Two more infected humans came running at him, and Naruto growled at them before jumping over them, twisting, and cutting both of them in half at their chests, destroying the little Flood creature. He jumped back just as a wave of chipped and rusty kunai landed down in front of him. Three humans dropped in front of him, gave single hand signs to others, and began circling while Flood infected humans waited for them to finish him off. Naruto sidestepped the first attack, twisted

around the second, and jumped over the third before going on the offensive. He kicked the first one in the shoulder, spun, placed the energy scythe at his midsection, and pulled back, cutting him in half. The second one turned to raise a rusty katana, and felt heat wash over his face as Naruto drove the energy scythe into his face. The third one came a running at him, his rusty katana held over his head. Naruto waited for him to get close before becoming a blur as he ducked under his attack and cut him in half.

The Infected humans came running as the mountain top exploded with a shimmer of scarlet raining down from the top of it. Hundreds of Infected Humans, Sangheili, Unggoy, Kig-Yar, Lekgolo pairs, and Jiralhanae began running for the bulbous ship as it came down into the large opening it had made. A Gravlift activated, and Naruto and Zorro both growled in anger as it began taking up the infected soldiers.

Naruto cut down the infected humans in his way as he began running towards the Gravlift. Naruto turned to see if Zorro was following him. No. Zorro was motioning for him to leave while he continued to kill them. He would cover him; keep the numbers from growing while he took out the ship. Gravity pulled at his stomach before he was lifted onto the ship. The minute he was inside, he quickly regretted it. Hundreds of infected soldiers turned to face all, all of them holding plasma rifles.

Naruto quickly became invisible, shut down his main power systems for his suit with the code word, and then ran towards the reactor. He never once thought he would have to know how to disable one, but now he was. He was happy that Rtas had beaten this part of his training into him, though he could have done without the whip that he threatened to use on him when he slacked off.

Naruto ran around the corner, stopped, checked his motion sensor, growled, and began running as hundreds of blimps appeared on his radar. They were all heading for him. They knew he was here, and they knew where he was going. It wasn't rocket science. All they had to do was just head to the most valuable part of the ship, lay down cover fire so thick it would be impossible for even a Lekgolo pair to get through, and protect the core until they got where he needed to be.

He ran straight towards another place he could set it off: The Bridge. He doubted it would be heavily protected, but that was also something he would have to expect from them. Naruto raced straight past a set of humans without alerting them, dove through a corner to avoid an infected human, and ran straight into the Bridge. The doors had been open, but as soon as he entered they closed behind him. The lights were completely out. The Bridges that Naruto had always been on at least had some light, just not a lot of it. But this Bridge had no light at all.

"So you're Kyuubi." Naruto tensed. Someone was here, and they weren't setting off his motion tracker or setting off a heat signature. Lights flickered on, and an old woman with robes sat at the commanders' chair. She turned it to face him, a smile playing on her wrinkled face. "I can't see you, but I know you're here, Kyuubi child, or should I just call you Naruto? I think that name was the one given to you by your bitch of a mother."

Naruto tension subsided, replaced with anger. "Who are you?"

She waved his question off. "You know how many attempts on your life I set in motion?" Naruto didn't reply. "I set eighteen attempts out on your life, and only one almost succeeded. I'm sure you remember the night you were burned alive. Had it not been for those peace loving bastards, Kakashi and Hiruzen, you might be dead right now. You would be out of our way." Naruto took a step forward, his cloak vanishing with just a thought. She smiled. "You've grown up I see. You matured from a tiny devil infant into a full blown demon."

Naruto reached for his katanas, began to unsheathe them, but suddenly stopped. He had questions to ask. He could kill her later. He kicked the door controls. Sparks flew from the destroyed pad, and she sighed. "Why was I chosen to hold Kyuubi?"

She snorted at him. "Like I know what that bastard of a man had in mind when he chose you as its host. I don't really give a damn?"

Naruto's grip on his katanas tightened. "Why did the people ignore the orders of the Yondaime Hokage? Why did they hate me for something that wasn't my fault?"

"You're a demon, what better reason to hate you. You're not human. You're just a demon in human flesh. That's all you are, and that's all you'll ever be." She paused for a moment, a sly grin forming on her face as she reached for something in her chair. "You were born a demon on the night of the attack. You took the life of our beloved Hokage. You killed his wife. You killed your own parents on the night of your birth. You ****are**** a demon, just like those demons that attacked and destroyed our world."

Naruto stared at her. "â€|stupidâ€|" She tilted her head a bit.

"What?" She raised a plasma pistol towards his head. She began charging it for a full blast to his face as he looked down at the floor.

"I was fighting for our people. But now I see that I was wrong. I should have just accepted my good fortune that everyone was gone. I never had friends. Everyone was always trying to kill me. The only person I could rely on was me from the day I was born. But now I see the truth. No one cared about me, not you, not the woman, not the children, not even the shinobi that had sworn to protect the village from threats inside and out! I was fighting to avenge our people, but what I should have doneâ€| WAS JUST FUCKING, KILL ALL OF YOU MOTHER FUCKERS WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE BACK HOME!"

"Yesâ€| you should have." She squeezed the trigger.

A green blob of plasma flew towards Naruto. Naruto moved his head to the side, evading the round. The woman had wide eyes as Naruto lunged forward, both weapons at the ready. With one clean cut, he cut her body in half from head to crotch. She fell to the floor twitching. Naruto sheathed both weapons, and walked towards the control panel. He typed in a few commands, and klaxons began blaring loudly. Naruto had activated all power from the core, and set it to meltdown

sequence. The reactor would blow up, killing everything onboard the ship. His people weren't his people anymore.

Clapping sounded from within the darker parts of the Bridge. Naruto twisted to the sound, gripped his sword, and glared at the figure that now stood before him. A fully healed Minashu was standing in the shadows, half visible, and half not.

"I didn't think you it in you to kill them. You're far more coldblooded than I am." He walked towards Naruto as he saw his conflict raging inside him. He reached for his hammer, sighing contently as he did. "I always knew you were an abomination. I just didn't know how far it went. For you to kill your own peopleâ€¦ why that'sâ€¦ just not right." He swung the hammer, and hit the dazed Naruto, sending him crashing into the bulkhead. Naruto slumped to the ground. He wasn't moving. "I am going to kill you however. I'm going to kill you for all the pain, suffering, and humiliation I've had endure because the Prophets Mercy and Regret chose to use you and your bastard family, the Sangheili, instead of me and my proud race, the Jiralhanae!" He grabbed Naruto by the head, and slammed him into the bulkhead again and again until there was a long cracked in his helmet. "I want you to suffer."

Naruto's head jerked up, three-tails suddenly forming. "Go fuck yourself." Naruto punched him in the face, ripping his head back with the blow before kicking him away. "Fuck you! Fuck you! FUCK YOU!" Naruto jumped on him, stabbing him in the stomach with one of his sword. Minashu grunted in pain, backhanded Naruto away, removed the sword, and tossed it am. Naruto jumped out of the way as it stabbed into the metal all the way to the guard.

Naruto ran at Minashu on all fours. He tackled him through the control chair, slammed him into the bulkhead, and began to pummel him with his fists as the alarms suddenly sounded louder. Minashu punched Naruto in the head, sending him crashing through the control panel. Chunks of metal stuck to his suit as he screamed out, "There is no God!" while running at Minashu with a white suit. He slammed a fist into his gut, forcing bile, blood, and a tooth flying from his mouth from the force of the punch. Chunks of his armor chipped, cracked, and fell off of his body as he doubled over from the blow. Naruto punched him again, this time lifting him off of the ground. He punched him again, again, and again until Minashu finally managed to break from of this cycle by head butting Naruto in the face. His helmet cracked a bit more, and then fell off.

Minashu stared at him. He had never seen this before. He had heard the rumors about how it changed his appearance, but he had never really seen it. Naruto looked just plain evil. His hair was now bushy and solid red. Both eyes were red with slits in them, like a Tekonate on Minashu's home world. His whiskers were thick and feral, making him even more frightening in appearance.

Naruto roared angrily as he dropped back down to all fours, roaring angrily as he dug both arms into the hard metal floor. Bulges appeared in front of his arms, and Minashu cursed as he watched them slowly, but rather fast actually, crawl towards him. He jumped away just as they exploded out of the floor, trying desperately to grab him. He had seen what those monstrous arms could do, and he had no intention of being ripped in half when he came this far.

Both arms remained where they were, but two more arms appeared from them at the wrist, and raced towards him. He swung his hammer. It just went through the hands, and he was caught. He squirmed and howled in pain as he was crushed back. Naruto slammed him into the ground. He let go of him, retracted his arms, and ran at him. "I'll kill you with my hands!" He tackled him through the dented door, crushing three humans that were trying to fix it. Minashu grabbed one of them, hoping to use it as a shield. Naruto drove his hand through his chest, and punched him in the face. The man slumped forward, dead. Minashu let go of the body, letting Naruto take him, and ran away. "You're not getting away!" Naruto threw the corpse away as he began to give chase.

Minashu ran straight to the Gravlift, and took it down after typing a few codes in. Naruto lunged at him, and tackled him as he began to go down. The two broke free of the Gravlift's effects, and plummeted towards the stone floor below. Minashu was struck hard in the back by the fall, but managed to kick Naruto off of his back, stand up, and grip his hammer tightly. Naruto crashed beside a human that was trying to limp away. Naruto stepped on his head, crushing his skull with a sickening crack.

Zorro was behind Minashu, and trying to do the same. When Naruto saw him; his eyes widened in fear as Minashu grabbed him by the neck. Zorro was one of his people, a friend, a family member, and a comrade. Minashu broke his neck, and threw him away with a grin. Naruto's eyes began to glow red as he slumped forward. He looked behind him, and saw a human with a stick. They had stabbed him in the back with it. His armor was breaking apart. His torso armor broke apart, revealing his sleeveless kimono shirt, stained with blood. Naruto gripped him by the head, tossed him in one direction, and then ripped it back in the other direction, tearing his head and spinal cord from his body.

"MINASHU!" Naruto dropped to all fours as a doom of dark energy surged around him. The area began to heat up. Infected soldiers began running away as they began to catch fire. Naruto roared loudly before a beam of dark red light shot into the sky, shooting a hole in the roof of the mountain. Debris and dust filled his vision before he jumped back when a solid red hand slammed into the ground. The dust was blown away, and Minashu gasped at what he saw. Naruto was solid red, almost like he was looking at just a body made of blood. White eyes stared back at him as a white light began to appear from his mouth. He flung his head back, and roared so loud that cracks appeared in the walls. Chunks of stone began falling from the sky.

Minashu took a step back, and Naruto lunged at him at incredible speeds. The alarms from the ship got louder. Minashu ducked under a swipe from his clawed hand, grunted, and swung his hammer into his face. The blow sent his head reeling backwards, and Minashu was able to have a taste of victory before he saw something that horrified the hell out of him. A second body appeared, this one forming from the back, taking the form of Naruto. It lashed out with a swipe of its massive paw, and missed cleanly. Minashu jumped back, kicked a brute shot into his hands, took aim, and fired. The two rounds smacked cleanly into Naruto's gut. He roared back in anger.

"Why!? WHY WON'T YOU JUST DIE ALREADY?!" Minashu ran at him, his hammer over his head. He dropped it down on Naruto's head. The blow

smashed him into the ground, making a large crater. Minashu leapt back, fear forming on his face. Another explosion sounded, formed, and everything from dust to falling chunks of metal and stone clouded his vision. This time, Naruto had six-tails, a skeleton structure forming around him, and a large ball of energy forming in front of his bone maw.

Naruto swallowed the ball, and opened his mouth after his body expanded and formed a crater. He opened his mouth, and thunder and lightning struck the area. The ship was blown into the side of the cave from the force of the blast. Stones fell from the sky. A trench lead the way of the blast that had formed, and showed the destructive power of its self by leaving a hole that lead through a kilometer of stone to the outside world.

Naruto leered at the hole with a big grin until Minashu appeared out of the corner of his vision. He had jumped off the edge of the cliff to stay alive, evade the blast, and was now back-up on his feet. Naruto shook with rage before watching him flee like a scared child. Naruto prepared to give to chase but stopped to stare at the ship. The alarms had stopped screaming. A bright light struck him, and everything went dark.

(-)

From the _Shadow of Intent_, it wasn't hard to see the blast from the destroyed Cruiser. Rtas had his eyes narrowed on it. It was odd how it had been destroyed. It was a meltdown for sure, but the Flood was smart enough to know how to fix it unless a strike team had done it on purpose. He had high hopes that were the case. He would personally thank each team member for doing such a daring thing without being ordered. It was the stuff that made legends of the Sangheili clans.

But there was something odd that he couldn't shake: A fear that was beginning to surface from deep down in his gut. He felt the chilling effect that had happen to him several times in the past when faced with something or someone far stronger than himself.

He braced himself for the shockwave that resulted from the explosion, ordered them to come to a dead halt, and watched as the debris came raining down. They were over the humans, and were able to protect them with their shields as the small chunks of earth and stone came falling back down to the ground. The mountain collapsed in on its self. Dust flew out of it, and billowed over the humans as three Phantom departed from the ship. As the dust cloud picked up, a loud roar sounded from within the mountain.

The Shipmaster and his crew, along with Miranda all looked at each other with fear in their eyes. "What was that?" Miranda asked fearful. Spark looked between her and the Shipmaster before looking at the largest of the screens in front of them. Two red eyes shimmered in the darkness under a chunk of rock. They glared straight up at them. "I think we need to move away from that mountain." She advised.

Rtas just stared at the eyes as they narrowed on their ship. The eyes moved, and a _small_ red sphere appeared just below the eyes. "Move the ship." He whispered calmly. The small red dot got bigger. "Move the ship. Move the ship now!" He screamed as the tiny sphere grew,

and then came screaming up at them. The ship flew into the air, nose up, and turned to the right to avoid the blast. The once tiny red dot was now the size a three story house, and flying straight up at them at alarming speeds. The ship shuddered, klaxons blared loudly, and the ship settled into a steady flight plan as the sphere of energy passed.

"Shields are down! Two of the three Phantoms were shot down!" A Sangheili cried in horror.

"But we didn't even get hit?!" Miranda shouted in confusion. "Did we get hit?!"

Kushina appeared, translating for Miranda as Rtas explained the situation. "No. But we need not get hit by that kind of weapon," he whispered. He closed his eyes sadly. "Five years ago, while on a testing planet for our new Scarab designs, Naruto was attacked, and had to watch as his friend was killed by a Jiralhanae during an assassination attempt on his life. He lost control of his emotion, and a six-tailed form emerged from his anger. A skeleton structure appeared around his body, mutating him into something that scared even me at that time. It took him ten days to return to normal. In that time, he took down nearly ten Scarabs with blasts of lesser power. I saw them not even come close to the blasts that would consume the closest of the Scarabs and still take damage. The force is unimaginable. Our shields will not last against such an opposing force." Kushina translated sadly.

The mountain exploded into tiny pieces of stone, some no bigger than a house. Miranda took a deep breath. _So he's got more power than a Nuke?! How can such a power exist in such a being? _

A large head appeared from the billowing dust cloud. Red fur, two glowing red eyes, nine-tails, and a massive paw that was crushing the remains of the mountain side that had yet to give away to his power: It was the Kyuubi.

Forerunners, help us all.

(-)

Johnson shook his head to clear the ringing in his ears. He was half aware that he was still able to count to three, a good sign. It meant he wasn't dead yet. He was also half aware that the Arbiter was trying to talk to him. He couldn't hear him over the loud roar of something in the mountains, the ringing in his ears, he the screaming Elites that were pointing at something. When he looked over to see what they were pointing at, his cigar, which he had put in for various reasons, all of them listed under stressed out and nervous habit, fell to the floor of the ship. Before them were two very large, very angry looking, and very scary, red eyes.

And they looked pissed.

The maw opened up, a loud roar sounding just a second later, sending saliva, chunks of earth, and broken bodies flying straight at them. The Phantom rose up, avoiding the flying debris, but was hit by the foul stench of rotting corpses and teeth that had never been brushed. The smell alone was enough to break enemy lines in Johnson's eyes. It had to have been the worst thing he'd ever smelt in his life.

The Phantom spun around as the roar forced down the ground. The anti-gravity pods saved them from a horrific crash at the last second as they roared against the strain of their descent. Dust billowed out from under them as a large paw, roughly two times bigger than the Phantom, came plummeting down towards them. The Phantom cried as the pilot forced it to the left, momentarily getting a glance of the frightened humans and Sangheili warriors that could only watch in horror as the large fox walked out from under the mountain.

The ship shook as the beast walked over them, not stopping to give them a second glance. The phantom came down beside the team of humans, Sangheili, and survivors as all Flood activity came to a sudden halt. Raul came up to them, giving a quick nod to Thel. Sasuke ran up to the Phantom as well, spying Johnson inside shaking his head. He hadn't gotten the ringing out of his ears just yet.

(Getting Away with Murder by Papa Roach was used for this fight. I think it's a good mech vs Kyuubi song.)

The scream of thrusters got their attention before anything could be done. Five Scarabs appeared, then two more appeared, and then two more appeared. Nine Scarabs walked around Kyuubi as it stretched its tired muscles out. It gave them only a single glance. The Scarabs looked like toys to it actually. The Scarabs stood no taller than fifty-seven meters tall. Kyuubi was roughly one hundred tall. He could step on one, crush it, and play with it if he wanted to.

The nine Scarabs quickly began charging their main weapons as Kyuubi crouched down low, ready to strike them with all he had. His nine-tails came down to the floor as he waited for something. As the first Scarab opened fire, Kyuubi pounced on the one in front of him, smashing like a watermelon with his full weight slamming down on it. Its legs struggled in the beginning, but gave up in the end. It went down without even being able to fire its weapon. Its crew of Jiralhanae, Kig-Yar, and Unggoy were crushed inside of it, unable to escape or move the reactor redlined, expanded, and exploded into thunder and heat.

Kyuubi leapt away before this could happen, and landed down in front of another, raising a massive paw to slap it away. It fired into the shoulder of Kyuubi's left leg, and it went down while swiping its flower petal cannon away. Sparks flew into the air as the Scarab fought to stay on its four legs as it was hurled into the air and almost onto its side from the attack. Kyuubi howled in anger over being shot, its massive wound healing before them all as it continued to roar at them. He opened its maw in front of the damage Scarab, a red glow forming in its mouth.

Another Scarab opened fire, this time hitting him in the side, near his ribs. Kyuubi's body jerked with the blast, its body slinging around from the hit that melted its flesh and releasing the sphere of red energy as it roared. The tiny sphere of energy flew into the face of the Scarab that hit him, and destroyed it in a flash of thunder and heat. Nothing remained from it when the doom of light faded. Kyuubi roared angrily at it just in case before the other Scarabs charged in at their max speeds, the closest one being able to ram him straight to the ground. Kyuubi rolled his feet, roared at them as they charged their main weapons, took aim, and fired. Kyuubi jumped above the blast, landing down on two of them, both being able to

support his weight as they equally shared the strain of his massive size.

The one with no cannon took aim with its Anti-Air weapons, fired a few charges, and was forced to cool down. The plasma rounds slammed into back legs, and it crashed to the ground. Kyuubi roared angrily as it got up, charging its red energy for a full frontal blast. The Scarabs began to split up, but the two he had landed on lingered together, their joints shot from his crash landing on them, and their legs near broken from the strain of his weight. He opened his maw, fired, and roared as the large ball of red energy tore through them, making them disappear in a cloud of vaporized metal and glassed stone.

The damaged Scarab began charging him, its massive turret firing blobs of blue plasma. Kyuubi jumped to the side, avoiding the weapon, charged, and slammed into it. It toppled over, began billowing out smoke, and began trying to get back on its feet. Kyuubi placed a paw on its belly to keep it from getting up, and fired a single shot of red energy into its gut at no charge. He walked away from it as it exploded behind him, a strange glint in his eyes as he roared while swinging his nine-tails around. They struck the ground, causing ripples to form while chunks of stone and earth were thrown into the air. Mountains rose and fell from its tails. Two more Scarabs went down when large chunks of earth struck them from underneath, rupturing the seals on their reactors, spilling white plasma onto the ground as they began going critical.

Kyuubi roared at the sky before shaking his head, scrapping a paw against the ground, and charging the last four Scarabs that were now sticking together. They charged their weapons, took aim, and fired. Two missed as Kyuubi jumped to avoid, but the last two had waited for him to do this, and fired at him. They struck him in the chest, and he flipped back onto the ground hard. The others began charging their weapons, hoping to down him completely as he got back up on shaky feet. Blood fell to the ground like a waterfall as its body healed at remarkable speeds. However— it wasn't fast enough to heal the damage being done.

Kyuubi glared at them as they opened fire. He jumped to the side, but the two that had hit him were now fully charged and fired again. This time he evaded them, and slammed into the large wall beside him. He caught a glimmer of shadows as humans and Sangheili went running through it. He paid them no mind. He could kill them later. Kyuubi charged them, slammed into one, and toppled it over before tearing it to pieces with its maw. Metal stuck into its gums, forcing blood and teeth to fall to the ground. The reactor was breached, and it exploded into a flash of vaporized metal. Chunks of it came down on Kyuubi as he raced towards another one. One piece struck him in the head, a leg piece, and sent him crashing to the ground before going under one of them. He stood up, using all of his strength to do so, and then tossed him away with his tails. It didn't fly far, and it crashed next to its brother.

Kyuubi opened his mouth, charging up a ball of red energy as he did so, and fired at point blank range. The blast destroyed all three of them in a flash of thunder and light. Kyuubi watched for any more before roaring happily as it turned to face the humans. Looking up at the top of the place, it jumped on top of the structure, listened for its prey, jumped off, and stared straight at them before something

hot tore through the side of its body, knocking it down to the ground hard.

(Song ends)

(-)

The survivors, humans, and Sangheili all took deep breaths as they fought to regain their breathing. A long run, very long run actually, to the wall, through the structure, and the evasion of infected soldiers had taken their toll on them. The survivors were all screaming in fear while the Spartans just regained their breathing. Somehow, they actually seemed okay with the fact that an aged old demon, its power impure and immense, was now chasing them down. The ODST had already admitted to shitting their pants while the Marine just mocked them. The Sangheili seemed worried, really worried about the safety of Naruto actually.

Dust fell from the ceiling, and everyone held their breaths as something began purring from above.

"Please tell me that's a Scarab." Tucker cried in a whisper. For an ODST, aka Helljumper, he was rather terrified of facing Kyuubi. Of course his job description detailed a lot of things he could deal with. Scarabs, enemy ships, big enemies, small enemies, but not a single part of the paperwork would ever talk about dealing with Kyuubi. If it did, then he was screwed, royally. A red blur landed down on the ground, and looked up at them with its maw opened. "Of fu-

-a beam of scarlet light slammed into the side of Kyuubi, knocking him to the ground hard. Tucker looked around nervously before spotting the savior. Four Covenant Cruisers with one more appearing out of Slipspace had saved their lives. Their turrets and lateral lines heated to a dull red, making them look like angry eyes that glared down at Kyuubi as it got up on shaky feet. Blood was now flowing freely from all of his wounds. All of them were healing, but very slowly. His movements were sluggish and uncoordinated. He was dying.

Raukee looked down when he heard a voice. His eyes widened in horror. _Minashuâ€|_

(-)

Minashu couldn't believe it. He just couldn't believe it. Nothing was stopping him. Nothing was stopping the abomination of life. The Scarabs failed to kill him. They hurt him badly, but didn't kill him. They may have slowed him down, but they failed to even kill him. A ship explosion at close range hadn't even hurt him apparently. He had been far enough away from the blast to survive, not get thrown all the way to the ground, and outrun the Kyuubi to the wall while dodging the entire fight. Now he was forced to watch as his last resort of a plan kicked in. Kill him with airpower. There was no way he could take out a target in the sky.

"Kill him! Hit the abomination with everything you have! He's wounded!" Minashu screamed to the Shipmasters. They opened fire again. The air will lit up with scarlet and blue plasma that flew down at the Kyuubi. They tore through his body with ease, and he

whimpered this time as he charged up a single orb of destruction. He fired just as another volley of plasma tore the side of his body. His attack took out two Cruisers, damaging another one, and leaving the other two intact with full shields and only a frightened crew.

Kyuubi got back to his feet, shaking as he did, and slowly began to move as the burns done to his body slowly healed. He shook his head to clear the blood that was clouding his vision. As he did, his tails slammed into the ground, raising mountains and destroying a few until he finished shaking his head. He took a step forward, glared at the damaged Cruiser that was trying to stay afloat now, and limp away. Kyuubi howled at it as he charged up another blast. Plasma tore through his side, knocking him to the ground, causing him to release the charged up blast along the ground. A long ditch lead the way to the wall where it tore through the entire side it hit. A two kilometer hole was left in the side of it. It almost hit the survivors.

The limping ship slowly turned around, hoping to get away. A volley of plasma tore it apart as _Holy Day _appeared from a Slipspace. A single Banshee flier was released as it sped towards _Shadow of Intent, _firing at the enemy as it did until it was safely beside _Shadow_.

Damn it! Why?! Why won't they just let me kill him in peace?!

(-)

"Get the women and children on first." Johnson repeated as he waved the survivors on one of the many Phantoms. The Marines, ODSs, Spartan III's, Sangheili, and the fighting force of the Shinobi survivors all helped load up the women and children on the Phantoms. As the Phantom closed its side hatches, it pulled away from the wall, Thel making sure they were all safely inside before they began their quick journey up to _Shadow of Intent_. Johnson remained behind to help load up the next Phantom.

Johnson looked up at the massive Kyuubi that had just jumped on top of one of the last two Cruisers, opened its maw, and fire through the core of ship before jumping off, sending it to the ground hard and fast just as it exploded into fiery bits of organic looking metal that pinged off the wall. The last Cruiser opened fire on him as he hit the ground, knocking him down hard. The Kyuubi cried in pain, whimpered, and then froze in place for some reason just as another salvo of plasma was launched. Johnson didn't know why it did, and to be honest, he didn't really care.

A new Phantom appeared, opened its hatch, and the two Sangheili in black armor began ushering the remainder of the women and children into the aft of the ship just as the Kyuubi exploded into a cloud of smoke. Johnson looked at the cloud of smoke, his eyes wide with confusion as he saw two figures fall to the ground below as the last Cruiser was targeted and destroyed. Sasuke shrugged his shoulders when Johnson gave him a strange look.

(-)

The Banshee flier dipped, rolled, and boosted its way towards the

Kyuubi as it was slammed into the ground by a volley of plasma from the five Cruisers. It fired a retaliation blast back at them, killing two while crippling another. The pilot took his chance. He boosted it to max speed, dipped down, and flew straight at its head from behind as the Kyuubi began to stand up. He jumped out of it at the last second, hit the soft fur of its body where it had yet to be burned, and rolled to his feet and running up its neck, not once breaking stride.

The Kyuubi jumped into the air, and he was suddenly, face-first on its back from the force. He gripped its fur tightly as it began to fall. He looked up in time to see the third Cruiser being taken out by Holy Day as it flew overhead. He stood up, shook his head, and ran towards the head with a three-pronged device in his hands. The Kyuubi jumped again, this time dropping down on the last of the two Cruisers, and clawed and fired at its hull before jumping away. The ship slammed into the ground, becoming a ball of fire before Kyuubi touched down.

Plasma slammed into his side, sending him to the ground, and straight into the wall. Kyuubi went limp for a moment, slowly began to stir, and then got up on his front legs before he managed to get to his head. A salvo of plasma was released from the Cruiser when he slammed the device into the temple of Kyuubi, forcing his eyes wide open in shock. Darkness washed over the Sangheili. He could taste metal in his mouth, and then he felt nothing, tasted nothing, and heard nothing.

(-)

The Sangheili opened his eyes, his flight suit gone, replaced by his SpecOps black armor he wore. He checked to see if his weapons made it. His energy swords made it. He was at least happy about that.

He stood up, standing only a few inches in water, and looked around. It looked like a dungeon to him. There were old prison bars lining the long corridor. At the end, a red light glowed brightly, almost as if he were staring straight at the white light to heaven. He could hear the sounds of battle going on behind him and in front of him. He gripped the bar of energy weapon, closed his eyes, and then ran towards the light.

"Get away from my son!" A voice shouted.

Laughter filled the air, forcing him to move faster towards the warring voices. ****"Try to make me, Yondaime!" ****A deep voice laughed.

Grunts sounded from within the red light as he closed in on the source of the fighting. He rushed into the red light, igniting his weapon as he did, and closed his eyes as he was blinded by the other whelming red light. He came to a stop in ankle deep water, opened his eyes, and gasped at what he saw. Suspended in the air by surging red chakra was Naruto, stripped of most of his armor, bleeding so uncontrollably that he should be dead, and plugged with red chakra tendrils that feed him red light to heal his body.

The Sangheili looked down to where the fighting was taking place. There, in the corner, was the man that Naruto had told him was his father. Minato Namikaze, the Yondaime Hokage of Konohagakure no Sato,

was fighting with the legendary demon, Kyuubi, and losing. He was pinned to the wall by one of his massive paws, unable to move, and unable to help his son. He could only glare at the legendary demon as it continually mocked him. The Kyuubi was free, his entire body sticking out of the cage he had been imprisoned in.

He looked at the large demon that continued to mock Minato, looked back up at Naruto, and then charged the demon with his energy sword ready to kill him. Neither was aware he was inside Naruto's mind until he landed on Kyuubi's nose, glared at him, and stabbed him between the eyes. Kyuubi howled in pain as he let go of Minato to try and swat him away. He was unsuccessful at first, but eventually managed to knock him to the ground. He growled as he stood back up, picking up his weapon as he did, and charged him head long again.

Minato watched him rush the beast, his eyes wide with shock. He regained his focus seconds later, a sly smile forming on his face. Kyuubi roared at both of them as the Sangheili stabbed him in the back after being able to climb on top of him while Minato summoned tri-bladed kunais, tossed them, and began slashing him all over. In his mindscape, Kyuubi had no real power. It was all an illusion to make his host believe he had power. His holy light was real, and could hurt you, but without a body, he had no power. He was currently just trying to transfer the rest of his power into Naruto's body.

The Sangheili dropped down in front of his left eye, and stabbed him in the eye. Kyuubi howled in agony while Minato appeared beside his son. He gripped the seal on his stomach, smiled sadly, and reversed it. Screams echoed from all around, and Kyuubi stared at him in confusion. Minato had been a man of many things, but stupid wasn't one of them. Kyuubi knew that much about him. He quickly began pulling his red energy back from Naruto's body out of fear he might be working with his plan. It took him a full two seconds to realize what had been done. They had reversed his energy flow so that when Kyuubi pulled back it would get sucked into his body, and explode out of it.

Kyuubi quickly began to panic. He hadn't planned for this. He hadn't planned for either of them to be here. Had he known he wouldn't have done it, but now the dice were thrown, set in motion, and unable to stop. He laughed at it all. He had been tricked. Had he kept up his attempt to possess' boy, keep his self alive by keeping the boy alive, he would have gained freedom. But that was the road not taken. He took the few seconds he had left to remember the fun he had had. His body became transparent, ghostly, and then vanished. The room was quickly changed to a solid white room, free of walls, a floor, or doors. It was a white void.

The Sangheili holstered his weapon, walked towards Minato, and stared at him. Minato smiled at him. "I never thought you'd be back, Xedraelee." Xedraelee tilted his head, a sly grin appearing with his mandibles. Minato laughed at him as Naruto lay on the ground between them. Naruto's body had been healed, but he was still unconscious. Minato looked away sadly. "You love him like a son, don't you?" Xedraelee nodded. Minato closed his eyes. "Thank you. Even if you're not one of us, I think you for seeing him as such. He needs someone he can love in his life. He needs a father. Please look after him for me."

"By your word, Hokage," Xedraelee replied slowly. Minato smiled, vanished, and the room vanished as well. Xedraelee looked down to Naruto one last time before becoming transparent.

"LIVE!"

(-)

Kyuubi's eyes blazed blue, and then smoke covered them. Xedraelee felt the sensation of falling for some reason. He came out of the cloud of smoke, and realized that he was in fact falling. He looked around, hoping to find his son. He found him. Naruto was falling beside him. He grabbed him, holding him close as they continued to fall. A Phantom appeared, grabbed them, and began bring them into the aft of the ship. Naruto awoke, his blue eyes burning crimson as his holy powers took form. Nine-tails appeared, his body covered by the overflowing power of the Kyuubi.

Naruto flung a transparent arm towards Minashu, who now stood with a slacked jaw. Naruto pulled himself out of the gravity well, and raced towards Minashu. He let the transparent arm fade away as he twisted in the air, slamming a kick into the side of his head, sending his body jerking towards the left. He slammed into the ground from the blow, and skidded into a broken pillar. Naruto calmly walked towards his Minashu, eyeing him the whole time as he got up, spitting out blood and a tooth before removing his hammer from his back.

"Why? WHY WON'T YOU JUST FUCKING DIE ALREADY!?" Minashu charged him, and Naruto did the same, his nine-tails falling down to eight-tails as he pulled his massive sword off his back. He charged Minashu as well, his sword dragging along the ground. The two swung at the same time, and Naruto glared at him with hateful crimson eyes. Minashu did the same. The two roared angrily as their weapons shattered. The two past each other, spun around, and struck the other with the remains of their weapon. Naruto's sword cut a long gash into Minashu's chest. Minashu's hammer handle left a long gash on his chest as well.

The two swung at each other again, striking blows on the other at the same time. Naruto watched Minashu stagger backwards, clutching the bleeding chest wounds he had. Naruto grinned happily. He couldn't feel his pain. He was certain that he would have done the same thing had he been able to. Minashu growled angrily. "Youâ€| mustâ€| DIE!" Naruto snorted at him, and charged him with his broken blade. Minashu did the same. They stabbed each other in the chest with their weapons. Naruto's massive broken sword went through his left lung while Minashu's hammer hilt went through Naruto gut.

The two spat blood on the other before Minashu kicked Naruto away. Naruto's tails diminished down to seven-tails as he came to a stop. Minashu charged him, knocking Naruto to the ground with his weapon, reached forward, gripped him by his head, and threw him at the wall. It dented in, and Naruto slumped to the ground, his tails going down to six-tails as he fought to stand back up. Minashu ran at him, throwing his weapon away as he began flexing his hands in preparation to tear Naruto apart. Naruto glared at him as he grabbed him by the neck. "I win!"

"You're mistaken!" Naruto quickly unsheathed a single katana, and removed Minashu's arm at the shoulder. Minashu howled in pain, backhanded him away, forcing his grip on the katana to falter. He

reached for it, took it, and kicked Naruto to the ground while driving the weapon towards his head. Naruto's hand reached forward, was stabbed by the weapon, and forced to the side, evading the attack. Minashu roared at him as Naruto broke it at the end of the blade where it had been driven into the metal floor, kicked him in the gut, and jumped to his feet when he let go of the sword. Minashu watched Naruto pull the weapon of his hand, and toss it at him. Minashu was stabbed in the leg as a result of not being able to dodge it in time.

Minashu removed the weapon, glared at it, and then noticed the broken tip of the massive sword. He grinned as he picked it up. It was long enough to be used against him. Naruto coughed up blood as his tails took another dive. He had only two as he tried to rapidly heal his broken body. He just stopped healing himself. There was no point in it. He gripped the handle of his massive sword tightly, pointing the broken blade at him with one hand. "This is where you fall, Abomination!" Minashu liked the sound of that nickname.

"Yeah, I know I am." Naruto breathed out slowly. He had only one-tail now. His vision was blurry, and he was having trouble hearing now as well. He could hardly stand. The pain was over whelming him. He could hardly stand. More and more blood spilled from his wounds. Naruto placed a hand over one with his free hand, brought it to his face, stared at it, and then locked eyes with Minashu. "This is where I take you apart!" He yelled while charging him. Minashu somehow managed to limp a run at him and swung his section of the weapon at the same time.

Naruto took a knee, coughed up blood, and smiled. Minashu stood his eyes wide in shock. His body staggered forward, he reached for something, and then fell over dead. "Iâ€ win." Minashu whispered happily. Naruto collapsed to the ground as blood sprayed into the air from his shoulder wound. At the last second, their weapons had hit the other. Naruto had cut Minashu nearly in half at the chest. Minashu had managed to slice Naruto's arm nearly off, along with a rib, and part of his shoulder blade. Minashu would be the first to die, that was for certain. But his body was too badly damaged. He had no tails left.

Naruto stared at the darkness that began to creep around the corner of his vision. The last thing he saw were the hooves of a Sangheili. He closed his eyes, and smiled. "Fatherâ€ I'mâ€ sorry, but Iâ€ won. I'll see youâ€ soon, father. I'll see you soonâ€ Minato-teme." Naruto slipped into darkness as his breath left him. His body went limp. He felt cold. He was dying.

A/N

Oh my god that was a one long chapter. 11622 words were used for the chapter alone. That's a lot for me. I don't think I've done a chapter that long before. Okay, before anyone screams at me, I want to say that I'm well aware Minato would have stopped Kyuubi from getting that far out of control or out of Naruto. I know he would have stopped him, but I never showed you how Kyuubi got out like that in the mindscape of his prison. I did that to prevent confusion and to save myself a headache later on. Also, there, even though Dragonman180, who also helped out on the size issues I had, stated that Kyuubi was taller than mountains. I understand that, but while doing this chapter, I kept wonder what kind of mountains we were

talking about. A Scarab could easily be taller than a mountain (Hill) if thought about. It depends on where you live, what you consider a mountain, and all that fun stuff. I've lived in a bunch of states, and a few consider hills that are roughly the size of a Scarab to be a mountain. So that's what put me in confusion. Even so, I had to shrink him down so he couldn't just look down at a Scarab and go, "ANTS!" and start stepping on them, because that wouldn't have been fun. Yeah it would have been funny, but that would have made it shorter. Also, before anyone starts screaming, this is a Naruto Hinata fic. What he said in this chapter does affect him, but he still gets with Hinata. So please, be patient.

15. Chapter 15

Chapter 15

Up, down, up, down, up, down. She rode him for all its worth as she threw her head back in ecstasy. She felt like she was on fire. She rode him, long and hard for what seemed like forever. She couldn't stop her hips from doing it. Her breasts had him hooked. He couldn't take his eyes away from them as they bounced up and down with each bounce. He wanted to just reach up and grab them. He couldn't though. Something was off. Something was way off. He had crossed his arms over his chest, opting to just watch her as she continued to bounce up and down on his hard rod for the last two minutes. She was either unaware or just didn't care if he was helping or not.

He closed his eyes, sighed, and reopened them to see her change places with someone. The girl had been Hinata, but not it was a young woman with short cut blond hair, smaller breasts than Hinata, and tanned skin. While the motions were the same, she messaging her walls, and grabbing her breasts while moaning much louder. "Naruto-kun! Ohhh Naruto-kun!" Naruto shook his head, closing his eyes again as a throbbing pain attacked his head. He opened his eyes, this time finding himself in a white gown with bed sheets covering his body. "Naruto-kun, are you okay?" Naruto turned to see the same woman undressed, and a worried look on her face.

"What's going on here?" She gave him a shocked expression. The headache hit him again, and he closed his eyes as they started to water and burn. He opened his eyes to sound of moaning again. He stared at the scene. Hinata and the other girl were sandwiching his hard member while rubbing up and down its length. Both of the girls were teasing the others' nipples. Naruto blinked. He tried to move. He couldn't move. Something was holding him down. "What's going on here?"

"What's wrong, Naruto-kun?" Hinata asked as she materialized on top of his body, her breasts pressing on his now bare chest. She licked his nose, dragged the bottom of her tongue down from his chin to his crotch before sucking on it. The other girl appeared on his chest, spread her walls for him to see, and began playing with herself right there. Naruto shook his head. "What's wrong, Naruto-kun?" They said in unison. Naruto shook his head, one arm coming free from whatever was holding him down, and threw a punch at the woman on his chest. His fist went through her, and she smiled.

"This isn't real?" He gasped as his arm was restrained again. He fought against it, cursing loudly as he felt a sharp pain in the side

of his arm. The woman leaned down to where her lips were only centimeters away from his. "What trickery is this?"

"This is no trickery." The blond replied breathlessly. Naruto shook his head as he fought to get off the bed. He was strapped down again. He could see the straps this time. "Naruto-kun!" Naruto growled as he glared up at her. "I love you." A gun appeared in her hand, she fired at his head.

(-)

Sore was thrown away as Naruto roared angrily. He was strapped to the bed, or at least he had been, and four Sangheili were attempting to hold him down. Attempting was the key word in that sentence. Naruto was currently throwing anyone and anything strapping him down at the moment, away. Sore was thrown straight into the bulkhead, slumped to the ground, and slowly got up while moaning about overly strong Gods.

Naruto arched up, howling in pain, and roared as they began trying to hold him down again while putting new straps on his body. He was able to break free of these, and was quickly back, to thrashing about as his body continued to bleed uncontrollably. The floor was slick with his blood already, but as more blood poured down, it was quickly changing color. It was once a human red, but now it was reddish green.

Sore shook his head as he jumped back on him to hold him down. Naruto continued to thrash about, fighting against his restraints before finally just calming down. They strapped him down with a few more straps, stepped back, and stared at him. His wounds were now healing thanks to the Huragok that floated around him, their tentacles running over his body. Naruto began mumbling things in his sleep as a few terrified Unggoy that had been in the room, and hadn't died, began cleaning up the blood while keeping their eyes on the young Jinchuuriki.

(-)

Anders pushed her glasses up a bit as she watched the scene unfold, via the cameras that she had tapped into on her computer. She was amazed at how strong he was without using the Kyuubi power. He was thrown Sangheili left and right while they fought to keep him strapped down or replace them. Yet there was something strange about it all together. He was swinging at something when a part of him wasn't strapped down. Maybe he was delusional? No. That wouldn't make sense. He had to be having some kind of a nightmare? No. Even if he was having a nightmare, it wouldn't be this destructive.

That only left one thing.

He was experiencing withdraws. Whatever was happening were classic signs.

The door behind her, hissed open. She closed her eyes. "Are you worried about him?" Hinata stopped behind her, her hands in the pockets of her kimono. Anders smiled. "You love him?"

"I don't know." Hinata whispered sadly. He saved her life. She at least owed him something now. She needed to save his life. It was

foolish perhaps. But she at least owed him that. A life for a life. Hinata looked over Anders shoulder, and eyed the laptop. Naruto was back to thrashing around again. A translator appeared on the bottom side of her computer as it tried to match it with any known languages in their systems. It was currently fixated with two. One was the root language, Latin, and the other was Japanese. The two were oddly mixed however. Hinata looked over at another computer she had, and stared at it. It was showing previous blood samples from when he was brought in to now. "So it's confirmed. He's mutating."

Anders put down a small cup of coffee. She had been lucky that Naruto had such an odd collection of items stored on most of the Sangheili ships, or she, along with a few others, might be very thirsty with no real way to drink. Thel had warned them however that if they took anything other than the cups, they would be killed by Naruto when he awoke and didn't get an explanation for why his stuff had been messed with.

"Yeah, it's confirmed, but as to what it is, I'm not really sure." She picked up a small tablet, and began messing with it. Hinata watched as Naruto became still again. "That makes eight in the last two hours. His convulsions and spasms are increasing with each new hour. Two hours ago he only did it four times. I'd say he's either on the end of it, or he's having one hell of a withdraw."

"Withdraw?"

"There's a chance that he could be going through a detox. The Elite that brought him into the ship claimed that Naruto had always used his power when he needed it most. Originally, he never used it unless he was angry. But as time went on, he used it more and more. Meaning he probably got addicted to it. Now he's experiencing withdraws because he's either not using it, or something else has happened." Hinata stared at the small laptop as Ahielee was thrown through the door just as a fat Elite walked in. It quickly went to hold Naruto down, hoping its massive size and weight would do the trick. Naruto effortlessly threw him away. "I think the Arbiter is talking with him right now about it."

(-)

"I'm so sorry." Zabuza muttered.

"What the hell does that mean?!" Sasuke punched him in the gut again, then the face, then in the chest before slapping him across the face, punching him in the face again, and then punching him in the nuts. Zabuza went down instantly with blood coming out of his mouth, nose, and skull where he had banged his head into the bulkhead. He quickly rose to one knee, stared at Sasuke as he threatened to hit him again.

"Sasuke-kun, stop it!" Mikoto yelled as she got between them. "I love him, and I don't need your permission to love him." She gave her son a warning glare. It didn't work. He towered a good foot and a half over her. Sasuke lowered his arm, and sighed. Mikoto breathed a sigh of relief. "Now that you're calmed down, why don't you meet your stepbrother, Momochi Itachi?" Sasuke raised a threatening fist towards Zabuza, but Mikoto, showing no fear of course, slapped her son across the face with a scolding glare. It worked in keeping him

from hitting him again.

"Fine," he huffed.

Mikoto breathed a sigh of relief as she brought the small boy out from behind the bed he had been hiding behind. He had dark brown hair, small onyx eyes that were hidden behind his long hair, thin eyebrows, and wore a small white robe that was almost two sizes too big for him. He was small in every way. He stood no taller than four feet, and probably weighed no more than fifty pounds. He was malnourished because of always being a lower class member.

Mikoto ushered the small child to his older brother, and smiled at the two, hoping that something good might happen. Sasuke bent down to his eye level, and stared at him with his onyx eyes. When Sasuke reached up to move his hair from his eyes, Itachi took a step back, bumping into his mother's legs when he did. Sasuke stopped short of placing an arm on his shoulder. He knew why the little boy was afraid of him.

"It's okay. I'm not going to hurt you." Sasuke reached into his belt pouch, and pulled out a small little data pad. He clicked on it a few times, making a series of noises before the sound of soft music began to play from it. Sasuke handed it to him, motioning for him to take it. Itachi stared at it before slowly taking the item from him. Sasuke had put it on a small game for him to play. Wellâ€ it wasn't so much of a fun game for him at first, but he soon began to enjoy it. The game was chess, something their AI had made them learn how to play to make them better Spartans and better strategists while on the field of combat.

Itachi pressed the screen a few times, tilted his head, and watched a pawn move. There was a hallow thump as the speakers made the sound of wood on wood touching when the piece was picked up and set down. Itachi watched the black pawn move from the other side, and moved another piece. Before long, He was sitting down, Sasuke beside him, giving him pointers while Mikoto smiled at them. She was happy. Somehow, somehow, the universe had given her second son back to her. She didn't know how he was alive, but she was happy. That was all that mattered to her. She wanted him to be happy. Zabuza was simply rubbing the bruise that appeared on the side of his face where Sasuke had decked him.

(-)

Hanabi sat up, blinking a few times as her eye was healed. The others that had been in the Pelican crash were also checked out by Elite doctors. A few ODSs were positioned over them, watching how the doctors worked on them. They weren't taking any chances with them actually. If the Elites slipped up, even a bit, they were going to shot them. Hanabi waved the ODSs away, a sign that they could be trusted. They hadn't killed her, which meant they were trustworthy. They glanced at each other before slipping out of the place while Hinata walked in with a smile. Hanabi smiled back at her as she jumped off the table. Hanabi was the smallest of the Spartan III's, but she stood a few inches taller than her own older sister. She gave her a slight nod as the others got up as well, the doctors finished them. The Elites looked over to Kushina, spoke something and she nodded.

"The Sangheili are requesting that you all not do much for the next two or three days. Your bodies will still need time to heal, even after being operated on." The Spartans blinked a few times, not exactly sure if they should take their word or not. Tenten shrugged her shoulders as the Elites walked out of the room. When the doors hissed closed, Hanabi glanced over at Kushina. "You don't have to trust us, but you must understand that we have no alliance with the Covenant now. They have lied to the Sangheili, betrayed them, and have hurt Naruto. They no longer hold much of a grudge with you guys, but they will not hesitate to kill you if you make a mistake around them. Two cultures very rarely mesh together." She warned before vanishing.

The Spartans stared at Hinata for a moment as she glanced at Neji. He had a few bandages covering his body, but nothing too serious to keep him off the inactive list. He looked back at the pedestal where Kushina had been before looking back at Hinata. "Hinata, you should know that we have found more Hyuugas. They are currently sleeping, but we did find a few more." Hinata didn't seem relieved by the news. "Is there something wrong?"

"No. I was just thinking?"

"What troubles you, Hinata?" Tenten asked as she leaned over to inspect her. Hinata brushed her question off as she motioned for them to follow her. The Spartans did so without question. They passed a few other survivors that were being treated by other doctor Sangheili. Kushina was in the room to translate for them. Tenten looked into the room, seeing a Yahiko as his damaged eye was getting looked at. Konan and another man wearing rags at the moment stood around him, just watching him as the Sangheili doctor messed with a small ball.

"You hate them." Neji blinked. Hinata sighed as she repeated herself. "Do you hate the Elites for what they've done; even now knowing that they were tricked?" Neji blinked. He didn't understand. He had been trained to see them only as the enemy. They were nothing but the enemy. They weren't good. They weren't human. They were just targets that needed to be put down. So her question was bit strange to him. "What do you think about the Kyuubi?" They walked into a room where Anders, Xedraelee, Kushina, and Miranda were staring at a computer monitor. "How is he?"

Anders pushed her glasses up with an angry sigh. Xedrael turned to face her, nodding to her while Kushina rolled her eyes. Hanabi eyed the sleeping teen on the screen. He was strapped down by nearly thirty black straps and ten laser straps. A dead Grunt was twitching in the corner of the room while two Elites just stared at it with blinking eyes. They were talking with each other as another Grunt approached its dead friend to pull it away.

"He's getting better." She replied slowly as she typed a few codes onto her laptop. Xedraelee eyed her as she brought up a few photos of Naruto's current DNA strands. Beside these photos were other photos that certain parts of his body highlighted. His left hand, his mouth, and his left eye were on the screen with abnormalities to them. His hand had claws on it. His teeth were now sharp and long. His left eye was now fully red, and had fox slits for a pupil. Dark rings were also around his eyes. "We've confirmed that the Kyuubi is now dead. However, the way he died has presented some unexpected problems.

We've confirmed mutations to both of hands now, his eyes, his teeth, and bone density. His bones aren't as strong as a Spartans', but it's nearly tough as them."

"Anders, he's going berserk again." Kushina pointed out.

"Damn it." She whispered while looking at the view screen. Naruto struggled against his restraints for only a few seconds before he broke loose, and sat up. He began clawing at his back, at the air, and then at the table. This wasn't a sign of withdraw to her knowledge. This was something else. It was like he was fighting with an unseen enemy. She shook her head at the sight before he started screaming in pain, convulsing, and then slumped down, out cold. "This brings it to five times in the last twenty minutes. I think whatever is about to happen is about to happen. We need to get someone down there to watch him. He could very well go postal on all of us."

"I'll get Sasuke's team to help out." Neji quickly walked out the door.

"That will not be necessary." Rtas stated as he approached them. Thel and Johnson were behind him, walking towards the group. "Human what can you tell me about this sudden mutation." Kushina translated for him.

She shook her head. She was really unsure of the facts at the moment. She had seen mutations before, mostly by watching how the Flood infected sentient beings. It was a brutal process. Turning regular humans into Spartans was brutal as well. "I don't know. He's progressing too fast for his body to take. I think he's not able to withstand it, and is lashing out at something. It could also be affecting his mind, making him do this. He could be reverting back to a primitive state. There's no real way to know for sure."

Thel looked down at the screen as Ahiel and Rauk entered with Raul a few seconds later holding a broken arm. During one of Naruto's many berserk moments he had managed to grab hold of Raul's arm and breaking it. Raul held no grudge against him. He had done many bad things while leading him, (He'd only done one, and that was not keep him in line during a mission) and figured that he needed it. Anders watched them as Rauk began messing around with the sheets, removing them so they could redo the straps.

The sheets were removed, and they found a mass of fur that was in motion wiggling around on his belly. Rauke also took note of his legs. They were close to a dogs' appearance. His feet had changed to paws as well, having only four stubby little nails on the end of his four digits. Rauk looked back at where the camera was, and gave the international way of "What is this" towards it. Miranda gave a sideways glance at his head.

"Can you please ask them to look at his ears?" Kushina nodded. A second later the message was delivered. Rauk looked annoyed at being ordered around so much, but complied. He moved closer towards his head, moved his hair, and the ear fell off. There was no blood. It was almost as if it was just glued there actually. A mass of sun-kissed hair lay where the ear had been. Rauke quickly checked the other side, and found the same to be the case. Miranda shook her head. "Does that make sense to you?"

"His mutation is progressing too fast for me to track. At this rate, I can only speculate where it will end and how far it can progress. He could turn into the fox for all we know." She pushed the rim of her glasses up a bit, and sighed. "I need more time." Naruto jerked forward before the restraints were fully in place, and punched Sore in the face when he tried to hold him down. Sore went down hard, but was quickly back up holding him down and trying to restrain him. He would have stood a better chance at trying to keep a Lekgolo pinned to the ground.

The other Sangheili quickly pushed him back down onto the bed and began helping him restrain him before the tail came to life, grabbed Ahiel, and threw him away. Naruto crashed down into the bed fully, panting hard, sweating, and mumbling something. Anders was quickly on her laptop trying to figure out what he was saying. She had developed a translator when she first heard him speak like this. She had hopes that she could get it translated. But no such luck had come just yet.

As the Sangheili suffered through another beating, it became clear to what was going on with Naruto in Anders mind. "He's delusional, having a nightmare, and he's experiencing something he's never experienced before. He's fighting it with everything he has right now." She surmised. Rtas tilted his head as he watched Naruto become still again. This lasted two minutes before he went back to thrashing about again.

"Release his restraints." Anders blinked when Kushina translated it for her.

"Are you mad?! Look at him! He's attacking anything that moves!"

"But he wants to go somewhere." Thel put in as he watched the screen. He looked to Rtas, and then nodded to Kushina. Kushina delivered the message, and instantly the Sangheili in the room looked up the camera, and gawked at them. "Just do it." Thel held his anger back. Xedrael leaned over to place his hands on the table and watch as Naruto got off the bed swinging. "We must follow him." Thel left the room with the others soon doing the same.

(-)

"Why are you running?" Minato asked seriously. Naruto swung a fist at him. His fist went through his head, doing nothing but message with the image of his father. He stood still, sighing at him as he did. "What does fighting me accomplish? Does it make you feel better?"

"Shut up! SHUT UP! YOU'RE NOT HERE!" Naruto started running again. His restraints no longer held him, and he wasn't forced to listen to whatever it was that the people were screaming at him. Naruto smacked into something hard. He looked up, and found a large dead Kyuubi. "You're not here. You're not here! You're not here!"

"Naruto-kun, I love you." Kushina, Hinata, and Yugito told him as they shot him again. Naruto howled in pain as he ran around the dead fox. He slammed into something else, and looked up to see his village. UNSC Destroyers were destroying his village. Naruto dropped

to the ground clutching his head as he felt another headache strike him. He curled into a tight ball, screaming as fire exploded around him. The heat washed over him, burning away his clothing. He closed his eyes tightly as the voices grew louder. The explosions seemed closer to him. The bullets seemed to hurt more. Naruto rolled over, open his eyes, and found a white flower garden beneath him.

There were no more sounds. No more pain. No more destruction.

"Hello!" Naruto jumped up, ready for anything. He looked around and then found the source of the voice. It was a tiny version of his self. He was standing only hip high to him, and was smiling while wearing his black and gold kimono and hakama set. The sleeves were torn off at the shoulders, and he had a certain smile that had seen before. Behind him were graves, each marked with the name of someone he knew while working for the Covenant. "Are you lost?"

"No." Naruto whispered slowly, as if uncertain on what to say. He looked at one of the graves, and noticed an oddly spelled name.

"Really? But you look lost." The older blond stood up, twisting his head around to stare at his younger self, unsure of what the meaning behind his words was. The tiny Jinchuuriki smiled up at him. "You're lost, you just don't know it." Naruto growled at him as he picked him up by the collar. "You're lost in more ways than one. They hurt you, and you're angry, but you're happy to have found survivors. The answer you got you, refuse to believe."

"You base this off what claims?" The little kid thumped his head, and Naruto stared at him, momentarily forgetting that this was all in his head. He set him down, and walked over the oddly named stone. He ran a hand over the surface of it before closing his eyes. It was the names of the people that he had killed. There were so many of them that they were written so small that they appeared as nothing but another language.

"You killed the wrong people, and are unhappy with what you've done. You want to fix it, but you don't know where to begin. You're lost, whether you believe it or not." Naruto stood up, and sighed. The little kid continued. "You have also told a lie that will be seen as the truth. You know that when you proclaim a person as your mate, you must keep your word. She has no choice in the matter, even if it was to save her life, along with our people."

Naruto twisted his head around again. "What do you mean by "our" people? You're inside my head. You don't exist."

"That not true. You acknowledge that your subconscious exists, and so here I am." The chibi Naruto proclaimed happily. Naruto didn't find it funny or something to smile about. This was just further proof he was losing his mind. Not only was he talking with someone that didn't exist, he was also losing the argument. "You want to protect them now, but are unsure on which side to take." Naruto growled. The kid was speaking the truth, but the fact that he was talking to himself wouldn't give him the needed answers. The kid continued as he walked up beside him. "I know that we can find the answer. I am you, and I know how you think. You'll find the answer. Otherwise, Hinata and cat girl will die."

Naruto prepared to grab him again when a hand reached out and stopped him. Looking over, he found another version of himself. This was when he was thirteen. The red tips had just begun to show, and he still wore the same clothing, but he had gauntlets on at all time along with shin guards. "You're lost, and I can show it to you." He raised a hand to him.

Naruto took a step back. "None of this is real. You're just in my head."

"True. But the human soul has three sides to it: The Human side, the Devil side, and the Angel side. Light, darkness, and humanity make up all things in life. You can never have too much of either. I am the darkness that lurks within your heart." Darkness greeted him with a fang grin. Naruto cringed at it. He saw it then. His right eye was red. Darkness reached out, and grabbed hold of his arm. Pain laced through his own right eye, and Naruto was on the ground crying as blood poured out from his own eye. "I should have warned you that that would hurt like a bitch. Oh well. Too bad."

(-)

"Okayâ€¦ he's come to a stop in the hanger?" Anders muttered as they watched Naruto hold his right eye. He was sleeping peacefully actually. Aside from the occasional growl, he was calm now. A few Sangheili were hooking the young Jinchuuriki up to a series of wires that ran from his head to Anders laptop. Thel motioned for them to stop as they came up to a busted door. It was dented in, mangled with claw marks and blood.

Rtas gave the door a simple weak shove, and it fell over into the darkness of the room they were in. Even in the darkness it was easy to see him with his horrified look that was spread across his face and his glowing red eyes. He was covered with cuts that appeared as if he were fighting an unseen enemy. None of his clothes remained. As soon as Xedrael saw him, he gasped in shock as blood began to ooze out of a new wound. He was quickly over to him, checking him out. Naruto remained motionless as he was worked on. He was breathing, but not moving.

Anders opened her laptop next to him, and pulled out a pair of sensors, sticking both of them to his head. She began typing on her computer as Hinata and the others appeared. Hinata was quick to cover her mouth at the sight his chest began to ooze blood out through small holes that would have been quickly identified as bullet holes. A few Sangheili doctors appeared to begin fixing him up.

"What's wrong with him?" Johnson asked seriously.

Anders shook her head as she continued typing before spinning her laptop around to show them. It was a graph with moving waves. There were two of them; one was weak and quickly getting weaker, while the other was quickly growing stronger. "There are two brainwaves inside him at the moment. Something or someone is trying to take control of his body which could explain why he's been acting crazy lately."

"Whose is who though?" Rauk asked. Raul was watching Naruto intently as he twitched when his forearm was cut in a crisscrossing pattern.

Xedrael noticed it, and quickly stood up.

"I don't know." Anders whispered sadly. All eyes went back to Naruto as he twitched again.

(-)

Naruto collapsed as he felt his body, get pelted by the bullets that Demon had shot him with. Even if he wasn't the one that had been shot, it still hurt watching as an image of his past was shot in the chest by a Demon. He was back on Earth, and watching as Seer was killed before him, and how he had been injured by the Humans. For the last ten minutes he had been forced to endure the pain of watching his previous memories he had always tried to run away from. He watched Varo die. He watched Ken die. He watched everyone that had been friends with him die. He watched himself kill humans and Jiralhanae alike. He screamed for it to stop, but no one would listen to him. His younger self was quiet, not moving or saying anything. His teenager self was talking, walking around in circles mocking him and telling him how pitiful he was.

The teenager came to a stop in front of him as the place shifted to the battle where Kyuubi took out the nine Scarabs. He smiled as he watched the Humans around them run away in fear. "Humans are so stupid. They're beneath us. There is no doubt about it." He told him happily. "Why do you fight for them? Why do you fight?" He poked him in the shoulder. "Look at you! You can't even stand from watching your sins. And you call yourself a being with supreme power."

Naruto looked up at him with a glare in his eyes. "Iâ€| never saidâ€| that."

"Yes you did. Would you like another tour of your mind again? I can see everything from where I am." He raised his arms as if he were a God while grinning happily. "I amâ€| a monument to all your sins." Naruto's eyes widened when he heard this. The teen began laughing. "Did you just now notice me?"

"Youâ€|! You're the parasite!" Naruto coughed up blood as he felt something claw at the inside of his body. He looked down to see that his chest was opening up. He could see the sensory nodes of the infection form trying to get out, allowing it to take full control of his body. _No! _"For the record, I've sin quite a lot. But on the off chance you don't know, I actually don't really give a goddamn about my sins. What do you want with me, anyways?"

"I don't want you. I want the whole universe. And you are my ticket off of this world." He laughed again as Naruto began to howl in pain. "It hurts doesn't it? I wonder if you had escaped from here, what you would have done. Would you have killed the humans? No. You're not a heartless bastard. You wouldn't have the strength to do it." He turned his back to him. "It doesn't really matter. Though you were tough to take over, you have shown me a great deal of interest by how far you were willing to go in making painful scenarios. All of those things you saw were nothing but you playing tricks on yourself. I wonder, are all humans as interesting as you, or are you just one of a kind?"

Naruto raised a hand above his head, straining to do even this. When he got it above his head, he closed his eyes. "Thisâ€| is myâ€| body.

Unless you wanna pay rent, I want you the fuck out!" He jammed his hand into his chest, and howled in pain as he grabbed the Flood inside his body. The teenager stared at him with a shaking head.

"That won't save you." He took a step forward to touch his cheek, but stopped when he felt something tug at him. "What is this?"

"I win." Naruto collapsed into total darkness.

(-)

Thel pulled out the Flood that had gotten inside of Naruto. It was far smaller than anything he had ever seen. It was small enough to fit in his hands, and was just as easy to crush before throwing it to the ground to burn it with a plasma bolt. When he did this, he quickly turned to Naruto to see if he was alright. Naruto had a hole in his chest that was being worked on just as quickly as the doctors could do so. He was lying on the ground, blood pooling around him as the doctors tried to close it.

Naruto had been lucky. Had he not stabbed himself, they might not have even noticed it. Even in the oddest of situations Naruto was still determined to win. He had to win. That's what he had been trained to do. Win. Win. Win. That was all he knew how to do. If he didn't win, he lost, and that meant he was dead. But the danger was yet to be over. Anders had already confirmed that the other brainwave was gone, but Naruto's condition was still critical.

_Naruto, please live. You deserve more than this. _

(-)

A bright light hit him in the face as he opened his eyes. Naruto slowly sat up, holding his left eye as he did. His eyes both burned, but he was used to it being in the right eye. He understood what that meant. He remembered when he first went through this. He had removed his own eye when he had damaged it during a training accident. Thel had tried to get him to see a secret doctor, but Naruto just removed it. He awoke the next day to see that he had a replacement eye. Thel got a minor beating, by Naruto's terms anyways, and could only say he didn't do it. Naruto actually didn't hit him hard or hit him at all.

Snoring got his attention, and he turned to see Xedrael sitting beside him, sleeping. Ahriel, Raul, Rauk, and Thel were sleeping as well. They hadn't left his side. He was sure that Rtas was watching him right now, or sleeping somewhere on the ship. He really didn't care though. He was happy. "Father, you live." Xedrael smiled, and Naruto smiled back, seeing that he was awake. The message was clear to them both now. Naruto turned his head to another sleeper, and instantly wanted to get out of bed. _"She is my mate." _Naruto stopped when he remembered saying that. He couldn't hurt her, unless they were making love. She was his mate now. She had accepted it unknowing of what was to come of his words. Now they were to be married when news got to all of the others. _Hinata, for what it's worth, I'm sorry. _

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Rtas closed the monitor down, breathed a sigh of relief, and looked back at his bed. _I should have sired as well. _He thought. In all his time being alive, he had hardly tried to make friends after the death of his friend by his hands. After that, he tried to distance himself from others, even potential mates. But now he wished he hadn't. _Uzumaki, you are far stronger than even me. I don't know how, but you have a gift with people. I wonderâ€¦ did you just have this gift, or did you learn it?_ He decided to not think about it anymore. He needed sleep.

(-)

Sasuke was asleep with his brother resting on top of him, the small device resting on his chest as he slept soundly. Mikoto and Zabuza were sleeping in each other's arms, Zabuza making sure to keep his hands clear from any private areas since Sasuke had a pistol aimed at his head while he slept.

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Konohamaru slept with Hiruzen, Moegi, Haku, and a few other survivors in a Phantom. Hiruzen was smoking his pipe at the moment, and staring down at his grandchild while the others all snuggled up to others for comfort. He was happy. They were all happy. They had a chance to survive, see a better world, and possible, save humanity. These people, these Spartans, were everything like shinobi to him. He would stand beside them if need be. He would be the pillar again if asked to be.

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Hanabi, Neji, Tenten, and Johnson all slept around Miranda in one of the larger quarters on the ship. They were determined to protect her, even if the Elites said they would not kill them in their sleep. They all had their doubts, but they were their ticket home. Johnson was sleeping in a chair. Hanabi was sleeping beside Neji, who slept up against a wall. Tenten was sleeping by the door in the corner.

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The only person awake at the late hour in the cycle was Anders. She was typing on her computer as she listened to Kushina speak about Naruto's life inside the Covenant. The AI had already given her the information on her translation software, and was now uploading specs for his weapons and armor. She smiled as she leaned back to take it all in. She smiled as Kushina finished a design model for her. _Hinata, you want a way to repay him for everything that he's done. This will give us a way to do it. _She took a sip of her none existent beverage, and sighed. "I need to get something else to drink."

"I'm sorry, but you need to sleep now." The AI replied quietly. Anders was about to protest before she had to smother a yawn. She suddenly nodded, and leaned down on the table to go to sleep. Kushina smiled at her, checked the room temperature, and raised it to a better level so she could sleep soundly.

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John stared at the active roster for Spartans as they came out of Slipspace again. Ship problems had been the cause of that. He was the only one now. He noticed a new entry that suddenly appeared beside Spartan-057 under the name of Kurt Ambrose, was now added as MIA, along with a lieutenant Ambrose. He stared at it for a moment. He was the last one. He had outlived them all. Only he remained for his generation now. He knew what this meant however. They were dead. He let out a dry chuckle at the very idea of that. _Spartans don't die. _He shut it down, checked his HUD timer, and then went to sleep. There was no telling when he'd be home, but he was willing to bet that it would be soon. And when he got back, he was going to finish it. He was going to finish the fight.

16. Chapter 16

Chapter 16

"Are sure about this?" Yugito asked carefully. The team of Spartans, shinobi that had gotten a minute about of weapon training, Sangheili warriors, Naruto, Thel, Miranda, Johnson, and the UNSC soldiers stared at Rtas as he carefully explain the brilliance of his idea. Naruto and Thel were standing by a large screen while Anders typed on her computer, Xedraelee watched the Unggoy bring weapons from the armory, and Rauk got Phantoms ready when they broke out of Slipspace.

Rtas closed his eyes, momentarily wishing he could just kill the Demon that had spoke. His plan was based on the battle plan that had been given to all of the attacking Sangheili when they had attacked Earth. There were key areas that had clusters of Mega Turrets, Anti-Air Tanks, Banshees, Vampires, the tear drop shaped Seraph fighters that were to guard a place where a holy relic had been found. The plan now was to go in, blow to hell, kill anything stupid enough to fire on them, and hopefully be there when the Prophet of Truth showed up so they could kill them. However, they doubted they were that lucky. The most they could hope for now would be that the defensive area was still intact, and that they could blow it up.

The only really flaw with the plan was getting there without getting shot out of the sky. There were others, but the main reason this was the problem was because both the Jiralhanae, supposing they hadn't gotten their mongrel asses kicked off the planet, and the UNSC, supposing that the Jiralhanae hadn't killed them all, were going to be gunning them down as soon as they appeared. Miranda put forth the idea that she could talk with Lord Hood, whoever that was, and get him to let them by if they had someone to hold as hostage. It would have to be someone important. Thel volunteered, along with a few other Sangheili, but it was Thel that would remain behind with Miranda and all noncombatant warriors.

The only thing on their side at the moment was surprise. The Jiralhanae, as stupid as they were, thought only about fighting and retreating if they were going to lose, but never really thought about other allied forces that may not know about what was going on. This meant that they had a chance to get in, blow up anything important to the damn beasts, and then head back out to help the others that were keeping the Flood pinned down on the ring world, along with the Jiralhanae.

Rtas opened his eyes and began to speak before Naruto cut him off. He did this deliberately, even know that Rtas would not take kindly to it. "This shall work. Rtas is a brilliant tactician." Rtas mulled over the idea of putting him in his place now or later for that. He opted for later. Naruto could possibly keep the blond female Demon in her place without assistance. Naruto eyed Rtas carefully, aware that he had done wrong, but he showed no signs of care for his actions.

Thel coughed, getting them back on track. Rtas nodded closed his eyes before he motioned for the screen to be cut off. "We will attack in three groups, hitting them three sides. This will give us an advantage over them. Uzumaki will lead a team of Sangheili and Humans. Xedraelee will be in charge of another team, consisting of Humans and Sangheili as well. The third team will be left to the Demons' commander, and will be in charge of whatever else we can spare." Sasuke straightened up at this. Johnson just shrugged his shoulders. "In order to do this, we'll be dropping you off in our pods so we can get this done quickly. Time is of the essence. If we do not act quickly, the Flood may escape from the Ring World."

"So all we have to do is blow up a few things after taking a thrilling ride in one of those odd cylinders?" Nagato asked. Nagato was sitting next Konan and Yahiko, Yahiko sporting a crimson red eye where he had lost his years ago. Behind them was an older man, long white hair, two red marks coming down from his eyes, and a woman in each arm.

"Indeed." Rtas whispered happily. He was surprised at just how many humans seemed to accept them. Those three, along with Zabuzza, Mikoto, Tobi, and an older woman named Tsume, had decided to join their side, believing in using swords, rather than guns. There were others, but they were hardly worthy of notice—say for one. The Demon that had spoke up. Yugito, a Demon of the UNSC, had shown amazing skill with Naruto's energy scythe. Rtas was already considering trying to make her Naruto's mate, but he could wait. Rtas unfolded his arms, and nodded to them teams to stand up. "We shall be exiting Slipspace in a few hours. I suggest you get geared up."

They all began to leave, say for Naruto and Rtas. When the doors all hissed shut, Naruto closed his eyes. "I have a mate." Rtas rolled his eyes. Naruto was far more worthy to have more than _just_ one mate. He could have two, three, even five mates if he wanted to. His power, mind, and over all abilities made him worthy of this. Plus there was also the fact that he had managed to uncover his _secret_ plan to get them together. If she were Sangheili, even he would go for her as a potential mate, even if Sangheili law stated that females were not to be anything but mothers and caretakers.

Rtas scratched at one of his lower mandibles as he eyed Naruto. "You have yet to bed the other." He spoke surely. Naruto flinched, his new fox ears that were solid red leaning back as they picked up the hidden anger in his words. Rtas noticed that his so called 'flinch' was anything but a flinch of guilt. "Or have you?"

Naruto gave him an icy glare before turning to walk away. "It does not concern you, Rtas. I have left your personal life alone, and you should do the same for me." Naruto stopped at the door when Rtas snorted at him. Naruto chewed on his lip a bit, drawing blood with his sharp canines. "What?" Naruto couldn't hold back his anger.

"We need to speak about Sore." Naruto's face fell.

He still couldn't believe it though. Sore had helped defend Hinata while she was still on High Charity, and even died defending her. Or so he had thought. Sore had been recovered by medical teams of Sangheili as they fled High Charity when the war broke out. He had been near death, his second heart working overtime in order to keep him alive. His pulse had been so weak that it barely registered. When the doctors finally got him stable, he had lost most of his first heart while his second heart remained damaged by the spike round that had broken off in his second heart. It was in a tricky area that not even the Huragok could get to without killing him. He had also lost most of left arm because of the fighting. He could still fight, just not like how he used to.

Naruto shook his head. "He's a brilliant warrior. I will talk to him however. But I'm afraid I'll have to make him stay up here, even if it's against his, and your, wishes. I will not lose another friend to this insane war with the Jiralhanae and Prophets." Rtas nodded, understanding where Naruto came from. Naruto enjoyed having friends, something that Rtas really didn't like. He never really liked having them after he had to kill his friend. After that he did nothing but distance himself from others, even his comrades that he swore to protect. "I'll talk to him before we drop back into normal space." Naruto walked out of the room, leaving Rtas alone to his own thoughts now.

(-)

Zabuza checked his gear over. Naruto had been kind enough to lend him some of his collection in shinobi uniforms, armor that he had specially built for his clothing design, and his weapons. He had the large sword on his back; gauntlets covering both of his hands, shin guards, and chest armor that were all painted black. Naruto had allowed him to add a special touch to it. In red ink, he painted the words, "Demon of the Mist" in kanji. He had also given him, along with others in his team, masks similar to his old armor, though these were modified to be worn by them, adjusting only to the size of their heads. He also had a plasma rifle holstered to his thigh, though Zabuza stated he would rather die than use a gun, something that had Rauk beaming with pride.

Mikoto stood beside him, clipping her helmet on. Like him, she wore black armor with a standard shinobi uniform under it. She had opted for taking the two katanas, claiming that she had once been the Red Hawk of Konoha. Naruto had read about her in a few of the salvaged scrolls, but they had been damaged, so he had no way of confirming this. Unlike Zabuza however, she had taken a dark purple ink, one that almost matched her armor, and wrote, "Red Hawk" down her back in kanji. She kept both swords on her back, and also had a plasma rifle holstered to her thigh. Like Zabuza, she didn't like using guns, but she wouldn't hesitate to use it if the situation called for it.

Inuzuka Tsume stood at the doorframe, clipping on her last piece of armor. She also wore the same black armor with shinobi clothing under it. She opted for taking a pair of Teko-Kagi claws that Naruto had built into his last suit of armor, which he couldn't use because of his changes to his body. He could have used the weapons, but he

stated that he would be fine in what he had in mind. So Tsume took them and the boot versions, got some ink, and wrote, "Beware of Dog" in white on kanji on her back, keeping her running joke going that had spawned while living in the cave after her last puppy bit a child. She also had a plasma rifle holstered to her thigh, but she also had plasma grenades on her belt as well.

Nagato and Yahiko, now sporting a new eye, both wore the same thing. Dressed in shinobi clothing with black armor over it, both wielding a single katana, and both having plasma rifle holstered to their thighs, they were almost alike in every way but one. Yahiko had chosen to write, "God of Justice" on his back in dark blue ink, while Nagato had wrote, "Messiah" in gold ink on his back.

Konan, by an odd twist of fate, luck, and just sheer willpower, had somehow gotten into the group to become the one sniper they had. She had managed to squeeze in some training before their mission to retrieve the Index, and had scored rather low in the beginning. But that had been with a human sniper weapon. Chichi, a sniper expert, had given her one when he caught her training with a human one. He gave her a few pointers that he had hoped would work. When they didn't, he gave her one of their own, and watched as she somehow managed to blow away targets with the thing at further ranges that what most rookies could accomplish. But the problem was that it was too big for her to use on her own, so they had to give her a carbine until Naruto's other weapons, his plasma rifles and snipers were rebuilt. She was dressed the same as the others, and had also written, "Angle of Rain" in white kanji on her back.

When they were finished getting ready, they followed the two Sangheili that were also on their team. Raul and Rauk had been assigned to their squad, along with Ahriel, who was replacing Sore since he had unfortunately broken his leg while walking down a corridor to the armory to get ready. It was rather odd how he had just suddenly _broke _his leg, but Naruto claimed he had nothing to do with it, to which Sore agreed, say that with everything happening so fast over the last few days, he hadn't gotten much sleep, and had tripped over his hoof while trying to stay awake. Rtas knew this to be a lie, but he also knew how Naruto worked. If you didn't listen to him when he was trying to keep you alive, likeâ€¦ when he tells you to stay on a ship because you're not fit for ground duty, then he just goes and breaks something. In this case, he broke both of Sore's legs, because he knew that if he had one leg, he'd literally hop into battle.

The two Sangheili came to a stop at a door, waited for it to open, and then entered. Two ODSs were already resting in their assigned pods with Yugito between them. The ODSs, few in numbers on the ship currently, were all being ordered to watch over the new ODSs, or in this case, ODSSs (Orbital Drop Shock Shinobi) as they had jokingly called them. They had no experience in a drop like this, and the only reason that the last group had survived was because they had ODSs to tell them what to do in case the worst happened: Which was kiss your ass goodbye.

The two Sangheili stopped beside their assigned pods, noticing that Ahriel was sleeping in his own. Rauk punched him in the gut to wake him. Ahriel snapped awake, a sly grin appearing on his face as the ODSSs got into their pods.

Naruto walked in a few seconds later, dressed in his long sleeved black kimono and hakama training outfit. Rauk had remembered when he first got it. Naruto had been thrilled to have something nice to wear. At both arms were his gauntlets. He wore a chest plate like the others, his old helmet, and his three types of weapons on his back and hips. He slowly pulled the long staff from his back, placing it in a small holder on the side of his pod. He placed his massive sword in the area he was be resting in, and grabbed both of his swords to place them beside the massive sword.

Naruto breathed deeply before speaking. "Systems check," he ordered carefully as the pod cover came down over his team.

"_Testing, testing, one two-" _Dustin began.

"_Knock it off, rook."_ Tucker cut him off with a quick growl.

"_My God, are all you OD-whatever the hell you are, like this?"
_Zabuza growled.

"_I was going to ask if those humans were simply stupid, but I think I got my answer." _Ahriel said happily.

"_Are you calling me stupid?" _Tsume began flexing her claws, ready to tear the Sangheili apart for his words.

"_Ahriel was referring to the humans in black olive, not you." _Rauk told her.

"_Yes. You humans are mighty warriors. You bring honor to us all with each breath you take." _Ahriel added.

"_I think my translator is screwed up."_ Mikoto spoke up.

"_If you're talking about them actually being nice and complementing you, then no, you're translator is not screwed up." _Yugito snapped angrily, her emotions getting the better of her.

"_Why would you guys complement us rather than them?" _Nagato added.

"_They've been at war with them for years now." _Konan put in.

"_Wow that must suck to suddenly have to work together, huh?" _Yahiko chided.

"Okay, the radio works." Naruto sighed. _I'm never doing this again.

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Thel stood beside Miranda, staring straight out at the main screen as stars snapped back into place. She blinked a few times as she looked out at the chaos that was going on around Earth. When she left, they were trying to finish mopping up all remaining Brute forces. There had been several ships still hovering around the planet, but the MAC Guns were more than ready to take them out. Ships, both UNSC and Covenant, billowed out atmosphere from breaches, floated around aimlessly in millions of pieces, and those lucky to be alive at the moment were still fighting.

As soon as they exited Slipspace, they were targeted by the MAC Guns. The ship banked away as the first round was fired. Miranda was thankful that hadn't hit them. She was standing, not sitting. She had watched what happened to those that weren't sitting when you came to a sudden halt. The results weren't pretty.

As the cruiser banked to avoid the shot, it left its belly wide open for the next shot. A single MAC slug slammed into the belly of the ship, raising the shields as the turned silver-blue before dissipating. Miranda flew towards the bulkhead, but Thel caught her before she could hit it. She gave him a pat on his forearm as a silent way of saying "thank you" before returning to Rtas's side. He gave her a quick glance to make sure she was unharmed. If she was bruised then the plan wouldn't work so well.

Chichi, manning the communications terminal, shook his head violently. They were trying to hail them at the moment. Truth be told, they weren't expecting anything more than static. But Miranda explained that if they kept at it, dodging enemy fire while they did, they'd be able to get through to them so she could call of the attack. Chichi shook his head again as his call to a hail was blocked. Their tactic wasn't working. They couldn't get them if they didn't want to answer.

Rtas didn't need to be told of the situation to know that it was worsening with each passing second. Their shields were gone, a dent in the hull, and they were venting atmosphere from several decks. They could still fight, and they would fight so long as they lived long enough to get to the planet, release the pods, and then rain hell down on the Jiralhanae that had betrayed them. The only problem was getting close to the planet now. Three MAC Guns were targeting them, making it just a bit difficult.

"Pinpoint Slipspace jump," Miranda whispered. Rtas glanced at her, his curiosity peeked by her idea. They could do it, they had done it before. It wasn't a hard process either. But Rtas wanted clarification on just where she wanted to jump. They could jump into the atmosphere of the planet, over a city, behind the MAC Guns, or in front of them. Rtas needed to know where she wanted them to be to make this easier. "Get in behind the MAC Guns. We'll hail them again while releasing the pods over their target locations, and start fighting the Brutes."

"We left forces down here as well." Sore put in from his spot at the weapon control station. He had two crutches, and had somehow got down to the bridge of the ship without letting Naruto know before he got to his pod. Rtas admired his bravery, but there were times when he wondered just where the line between bravery and stupidity was. Nevertheless, he was doing a good job at not shooting back so far. "If there are survivors, we must contact them to let them know of the Prophets and Jiralhanae's betrayal."

Rtas closed his eyes. This just added another thing to long list of objectives to complete.

"Prepare for a jump to Slipspace. Give me a solution on our target coordinates and a place behind the human weapons." He ordered. He turned to Thel, nodding his head. Thel nodded back as he prepared to launch the pods. The stars blurred out of existence for only a moment

before they snapped back into place. The once quarter sized planet was now too big to be seen on the main view screen. They were now behind the MAC Guns. "Launch the pods."

"Pods away," Thel reported a second later, straining as turret fire began to pepper their hull.

"Have you got them yet?" Miranda asked impatiently. Chichi shook his head, but only for a moment before he got a confirmation that they were getting a reply. A screen popped up, revealing an old man, aged by the years of leading major battles. He wore a white uniform, was clean shaven, and somehow held back his look of surprise at seeing Miranda alive, and with Elites standing beside her. "Lord Hood, don't fire on this ship or the pods we just launched." She spoke quickly, and surely. Hood raised one eyebrow at her words. "It's a long story, but the short version is that they're here to take out the Prophet of Truth for lying to them, kill the Brutes for betraying them, and also for deceiving Kyuubi, more commonly known as Naruto." Lord Hood stared at her with a blank stare before shaking his head.

"How do you expect me to believe you when you have ten Elites standing around you with weapons?" Good question. That was why they had sent the team. If he needed reason, this would do the trick.

"The pods we launched had humans and Elites working together, along with the Kyuubi. They're going to take out the anti-air batteries and tanks in key areas around whatever it was they found in the sand around New Mombassa. I'm sure you'll be grateful they did it." Hood turned to speak someone off screen for a moment. A few seconds later, he was looking at another screen on his end. One minute wasn't long enough for them to break through the atmosphere of the planet and land. That would take another two or three minutes at their current speeds. A similar screen appeared on their end as well, showing the descending pods as they streaked through the sky.

"We're calling off the guns for the time being. If this strike team you sent in can do what you say they're going to do, I might find myself a little more stunned by how things are going." He replied sharply. Keys nodded while looking back at Rtas as he growled out orders to his crew to begin targeting the Jiralhanae controlled ships that still flew around the planet, harassing the UNSC fleet and glassing the planet.

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The Covenant pods slammed down into the ground hard. Naruto shook his head as he could hear the sound of gunfire sounding just outside his pod. He could hear the hatches on the Human pods kicking open first before his were kicked open. When he got out, he was greeted by three MA5C ICWS Assault Rifles held by three ODSTs. Raul, Rauk, and Ahriel were greeted by the same thing, the only difference being that Zabuza was reaching for his sword while the others stood there with a blank stare.

Yugito and the ODSTs quickly called them off, explaining that they were friends for the time being. Naruto ignored the guns as he walked up to a ledge while Konan and Nagato threw up from the ride. The ODST named Dustin shook his head at her. "And you called me a rookie, Sir." He pointed to Konan as she finished wiping away the green slim

from her mouth before clicking her helmet back on. Tucker shook his head at Dustin's words before looking around.

"Who's in charge here, Private?" Tucker nodded to the shortest of the three ODSs.

The ODS shook its head. "I think you are now, Sergeant." It was a female. She scanned over the oddly dressed shinobi. "Who are they, sir?"

"Allies for the time being," he explained with a moan. "Our mission is to take the fucking gun apart, blow anything that's not friendly to hell, and take back our fucking planet. You got me?" They gave out crisp salutes before returning to their posts.

Naruto walked past Tucker, momentarily giving him the silent message. "I'm in charge of this. Not you. Calling off your men is one thing, but leading them while under my leadership is another. Do not cross me again." Tucker wondered if he could actually take him, but he figured he couldn't. Naruto walked over to the pile of sandbags that had been placed alongside a cliff that overlooked a long stretch of black concrete with white lines.

He looked over to see where the Jiralhanae Cruisers were digging with precious laser weapons. They were drilling in a circle, forming a large circling on the ground. It was probably twenty-five kilometers in diameter alone. There were about eighteen cruisers hovering over the place, burning away the cold earth that had buried the artifact for so long. Naruto was certain that was the Ark. He was slightly surprised by the fact that he wasn't worried about getting on the ships. No. He was more worried about taking down the Anti-Air weapons, Mega Turrets, and crazy air units that were stationed around the damn circle.

"What's our plan of attack?" The Private asked. Naruto looked her over. Inuzuka Hana was stenciled into her black armor and olive. Naruto nodded to her, motioning for her to come join him. She quickly did, looking over at what he was pointing at while Tucker checked the other two over. As Dustin checked them all over with his commander, Naruto motioned to a small section where there were more Brutes and massive weapons. They had a few humans dressed in black tied up, and stuffed into small cells. The ones they pulled out were killed after they got what they needed to know. "That's the rest of our squad. They were captured when we dropped down." She explained.

"We'll rescue them first, and then we'll hit the weapons. We'll need to move fast and strike hard though." Tucker gave Naruto a hard look, almost demanding that this take place. Naruto closed his eyes, sighing angrily at the fact that this had to do this in order to gain their trust. Naruto really didn't care about making friends with them. The only thing on his mind was getting back up to _Shadow of Intent _so he could get away from the planet. Tucker shook his head, looking over the other two ODSs. Their name tags read Isaribi and Maverick.

Naruto turned to his team, giving them crisp hand motions before walking into the shadows of a path that lead down to the road. Rauk became invisible while Ahriel pulled his beam rifle off his back, sighting up targets for them to take out. As Naruto walked down the shadowed path, he came to a stop beside a large tree that was charred

from plasma fire. It was lucky that it was so big, so old, and so full of life when it had been shot, because if it hadn't, Naruto would probably have been seen with the way he was moving, the three ODSs would be dead, and their pods might have been damaged by their landing on the damn tree.

He peeked around the corner, and spotted a squad of sleeping Unggoy. Naruto's eyes fell at the sight of them sleeping. He hated that they did that. They got away with that while he would have been kicked in the ass for it. Naruto gave Ahriel a few sharp motions for him to take them out. The silence bolts of highly concentrated plasma tore through their heads, killing them, and throwing their lifeless bodies around. Once they were dead, Naruto pressed forward, scanning the area before motioning for his team to follow.

Raul and Rauk were already beside him, cloaked, and ready to shed Jiralhanae blood. The ODSs, ODSSs, and single Spartan, soon appeared behind him, all of them taking up strategic points. Ahriel was cloaked, and probably back in a sniping area that would make him hard to find. Naruto stared at his team, then the other three ODSs that were eyeing them. Naruto shook his head as Yugito pulled her carbine from her back. When she began to take aim, Naruto raised a hand to stop her. She gave him a bit of an odd glance before he pointed to a small area that had a large tree with thick leafs covering its branches. She nodded, and became invisible as she walked towards the tree to take up a sniping position after taking one of the Isaribi's sniper rifle.

Naruto gave quick hand motions to his team, and they quickly picked up on them. It was pretty easy to understand the signs for "Move out" when he motioned towards the shadowy path and began walking through it. The ODSs gave Tucker an odd look before continuing on. Naruto lead them through the pathway, checking every few minutes with the two snipers that were watching them. Occasionally he could see them taking out stray targets, namely idiots that decided to pee in a dark corner where no one would find them. When they finally did make it up to the area, Naruto suddenly had a better idea.

He turned to face the team, and motioned for them to come closer. "Demon, Ahriel, watch our backs while I explain our new plan of attack," he ordered over the radio. He got nothing but silence back, which was good in his mind. "Okay, you guys go rescue your men, anyway you want. I want Zabuzza, Tsume, and Mikoto to come with me. Konan, you're on sniper detail. Nagato, you're her spotter. Yahiko, you see anything trying to get in behind them, take them out. You guys have three minutes to get your people back to where we landed. I'll make a distraction so you can make a run for it. I'm going to blow the Mega Turret's main reactor. That should do enough damage to this area to take out the Anti-Air weapons. Understand?" They all gave him quick nods while Konan pulled her carbine from her back. He gave them a sharp nod before turning to face an empty spot. "Rauk, Haer, you guys will be helping the humans get their attention." A shimmer of motion got their attention, but they didn't know if it was a nod or a shake of the head. "Move out."

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Three minutes didn't sound like a lot of time. In fact, it didn't sound like the right amount of time. But somehow, it just was the right amount of time. Well, for ODSs it was. ODSs were well known

for being crazy, maybe even insane with the things they did. "First to drop, first to fight" was their motto, and they loved it. That was sort of how they earned the nickname "Helljumpers" in the first place. But three minutesâ€¦ wellâ€¦ it was just right.

Tucker gave them sharp, clean motions, motioning for them to split up into two teams. Isaribi, Hana, and Maverick would retrieve their people give them weapons and then flank the enemy. Raul, Rauk, and Tucker would hang back and keep the enemy focused on them while the others carried out their portion of the plan.

The first clue that the Brutes had that they were under attack, came from when three greenish brown pieces of metal landed down in front of them. One of the minor Brutes stared at it for a fraction of a second before the ball of metal exploded into tiny fragments and heat that splashed all over him, and two others, killing two while wounding the third. The third dropped, clutching the side of its face before a quick, three-round, burst tore half of its face off. When this happened, the others were quickly on their feet, and rushed to the frontline to face the enemy head on, a standard tactic by the Brutes.

Raul ducked as they began to unleash a volley of hard crystal rounds that stuck into the stone, superheated, and then rapidly cooled to black. Rauk ducked as well, and watched as the single ODS'T remained standing, firing, and screaming obscenities at the beasts that roared back in anger. Raul blinked once, surprised by this humans' courage. He glanced over at Rauk for a moment before shrugging his massive shoulders. They popped up, took aim, and returned fire, keeping the enemy focused on them.

Tucker ducked back behind his cover, fiddling with his gun before he managed to remove the emptied magazine, and inserted a new one. He slapped a new one in and stood up to take aim at a few more Grunts that were charging with plasma grenades in their hands. The two Elites quickly did the same, sniper fire taking out targets that would run for the turrets that weren't occupied.

Tucker took a second to watch as a squad of ODS'Ts, the former captured men and women, were rescued by the other team. They gave a short nod that he was able to pick up through his scope, signaling that they were ready to begin. Tucker took cover, looked at the two Elites, smiled, and nodded. "We're going to get their attention while you hit them from behind." He told them over radio. The two Elites nodded, rose, and the three began to fire down on the enemy.

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Lieutenant Kimimaro blinked the blood out of his eyes as he was thrown into the holding cell. They weren't holding him for information reasons. They planned on eating him when they got hungry enough to do so. He had been a lucky one. Luck actually had nothing to do with it. His warthog got turned over because Sakon couldn't drive for shit, and Ukon couldn't work the turret good enough while his insane brother tried to run Grunts, Jackals, and Brutes over. He did manage to hit one Brute, which caused the vehicle to get turned over in the first place.

When he hit the large bastard, he had forgotten, or just hadn't seen,

the spike grenade it was holding. It threw it under the warthog before it blew up. When it did, the vehicle was gutted, thrown over, and exploded into a ball of molten fire. Sakon hadn't gotten out in time, and was killed instantly when the grenade went off. Ukon was killed by being thrown to high when the warthog blew up, flipping forward, throwing him high into the air. Kimimaro had passed out from the pain, and found himself in a cell beside Private First Class Shizune, a medic in the ODST Corp.

So now both of them were just waiting for something to happen.

The two Grunts that were guarding them were sleeping on the job. Both had needlers and four stationary plasma grenades. They were a threat, but they weren't that much of a threat while they slept. Still, he they were both surprised when three ODSTs walked past them, both casting a quick glance at the sleeping Grunts. The tallest of the three motioned for silencers, and gave each one a round in the head. They dragged the bodies out of the line of sight, and walked up to Kimimaro as he rose to his feet with his arms behind his back, still bound by the makeshift cuffs. Shizune rose a few seconds later.

"Lieutenant, it's good to see you again." Hana greeted as she deactivated the shield keeping them inside. Kimimaro rolled his eyes as he turned around for her to remove the rope that was keeping his arms tied together. "We don't have much time to explain, but we're about to get you guys out of here, head back to the LZ, and link up with Sergeant Dustin and his new friends."

"Friends?" Shizune asked as she picked up a needler, the plasma grenades, and took cover beside the wall.

"Apparently, the Elites are on our side for the time being." Isaribi explained. She pressed her back against the wall, looked around, and then gave a nod to the others. "We should be getting a distraction any moment now." Three seconds later, klaxons began blaring, Brutes began running past them, and the ODSTs all looked out to see the massive turret crumpling with massive explosions knocking off parts of the alien metal. One final explosion at the base brought the thing to the ground, and it crushed the remaining Brutes that were rushing them when they turned around to see them also now shooting at them.

"Nice distraction." Shizune muttered. The others all sighed as they began leaving.

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Tucker gawked at the "distraction" and sighed to himself. "Is he always like this?"

Rauk blinked once before answering. The new translators took care of what he said. "Naruto is very passionate about his work sometimes when angered." Tucker blinked, shrugged, and then just went back to shooting, mopping up the remaining forces as the others came around the side to get to them.

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Naruto, Zabuza, Mikoto, and Tsume all melded with the shadows of the

large turret. They were inside it now. It wasn't that hard to get into actually. Just a few dozen Jiralhanae patrolled, and it was nothing but a piece of cake for the shinobi team. Zabuza was like Vore, in the way that he couldn't be stopped when you gave him a sword. Mikoto was quick, just like Raiden. Tsume was like a rabid Kenta when angered about losing their mates. And Naruto was just like a pissed off teenager that had a score to settle. He did have a score to settle.

Naruto pressed his back against the dark purple metal wall, closed his eyes, concentrating on the sounds and scents he picked up in the room behind them. He could smell the musty air of the Jiralhanae. He could hear the clawed feet of the Kig-Yar scratching the floor as they patrolled the power core room. He could hear the small whimpers of fear from Unggoy that were either sleeping or watching the Jiralhanae in the room.

Naruto opened his eyes, looked back at his team, blinking a few times as he did. He, in more ways than one, felt odd working with them. He hated the humans, his former villagers, and he hated working with strangers. But they had proven themselves to him. They were all capable. Maybe he was wrong to judge them so poorly? He had always prided himself on getting to know every Sangheili that was willing to be friends with him. He was never evil to them unless they needed a reminder, and he had never judged others before getting to know them. But now he was being just like his former village.

He shook his head, clearing his mind of those thoughts. He could apologize later. He had a mission to complete.

He gave sharp hand signals to them, and they nodded understanding his signals. Naruto was happy they at least understood his signals, and was hoping even more that they had other things in common other than fighting skills and hand signs. He peeked around the corner. He could see the Jiralhanae. It wasn't hard to miss. It was huge. Naruto recognized him easily.

The large body, a fist so big he could easily grab a Lekgolo by its "head" and crush it, the massive dark colored armor, the over-sized hammer, and the mess of food sitting before him. It was Ragno, the strongest Chieftain in Jiralhanae terms of strength. Intelligence wise not so smart though. He couldn't add for shit, plan for shit, and he always, always, always had a plate of food sitting in front of him. Ragno was one, if not the, strongest Jiralhanae alive. He was nearly as big as a Lekgolo thinks to how much he ate all his life. His strength was legendary among all Jiralhanae. He could bend a Lekgolo shield with his bare hands. But when it came to anything but fighting, you might as well just get a wild animal to plan an assault, because they would do far better than him. His strength was balanced by his stupidity.

And Ragno was the stupidest Jiralhanae around. Naruto was sure that he didn't understand pain because he'd seen him take rounds to the guts without flinching or being aware that he had been hit.

It didn't matter though. Naruto would have to take him on in order to get to the reactor. He looked back at his team, and gave them a quick countdown before running around the doorframe. Stunned Kig-Yar were the first to fall before they moved onto the Unggoy who simply ran around screaming in terror. When they finished the Unggoy was when

the four Jiralhanae stood up, their Chieftain still happily eating his food.

Naruto gave them a quick hand motion, ordering them to stop and take cover as the four Jiralhanae pulled their brute shots up. Auto grenades flew through the air, slamming into their cover behind a control panel. Naruto knew that the control panel did everything from regulate the power supply to wiping their asses. The rounds slammed against it, chipping and cracking the hard metal structure before it finally broke apart. When it did, Naruto jumped from behind their cover, pulled his scythe from his back, and rushed them. Naruto cut through the first one, spun, and stabbed a second one in the face with his weapon. It sizzled and spat out crisp specks of blood before he yanked it free.

Zabuza and Mikoto jumped over their cover as well, grabbing their weapons as well, and attacked the third one. Mikoto proved how quick she was by appearing in front of the dazed Jiralhanae before stabbing him in the foot with one of her swords. He yelled in pain, swung a fist, and she ducked under it while stabbing him through the jaw and skull. She did a back handspring to get away from it as Zabuza came down with the large sword and cut him in half.

Tsume appeared in front of the fourth one, grinning wildly as she slashed at its gut, legs, and then chest with a flurry of swipes that had Naruto mesmerized by her fighting style. She was quick, precious, and every move rolled into another. However, with the energy claws only about an inch long, they couldn't do much to them other than make them angry. The Jiralhanae took two steps back, roared, and then ran at her. Tsume growled at it, ducked under its wide swing, and punched it in the chest. She focused all of her strength into the one arm, hoping it would go through them. No such luck. The Jiralhanae reeled back as the blades burned his heart before he managed to backhand her away. He died when the weapon came out. Tsume crumpled to the ground after slamming into another control panel.

"I want more food!" Ragno shouted angrily.

Naruto looked up at him, blinking. _You have got to be kidding me,_ he thought while staring at him. Ragno was unaware of them. Naruto grinned. _Perfect._ He crept towards him, his long katana ready to deliver a silent and killing blow. Naruto placed the tip into the folds of his armor where his heart was, and pushed it through. Ragno spun around, jerking the weapon free from Naruto's grasp. Naruto gasped at him as he stood up, towering over him. Naruto had no doubt in his mind that he was nothing but ant to him. But ants could fight and could bite hard.

Naruto punched him in the groin, stepped on his knee when the blow struck his brain that he was hurt, and then kicked him in the side of the head. His head jerked with the blow, and he shook it off before taking two steps and falling over dead. Naruto blinked.

"Tsume is alive, but she needs medical attention." Mikoto stated. Naruto glanced over at her. A pool of blood was around her. They had to hurry, or she would die soon.

"Get back to the LZ. I'll take it from here." Naruto ordered as he began typing in a line of codes on the control panel. Zabuza picked up the unconscious woman, slung her over his shoulder, and began

running without question. Mikoto remained behind for a moment. "Go. I'll be alright."

"Understood." Mikoto left, following the man she loved without looking back.

Naruto closed his eyes, and went back to typing on the consol. The bright blue reactor began to light up, changing from blue to white in a matter of seconds. Naruto continued to type before a large hand knocked him away. He skidded along the ground before coming to a crunchy stop at the wall. Shaking his head, he stood up, growling as he did. Ragno stood before him, alive, and angry. "Didn't I kill you once already?" Ragno snarled at him, and lunged. Naruto knew he could take him in a straight up strength fight. He'd have to use his speed to his advantage.

He jumped under him as he came down where he once had been, denting it when he threw an oversized fist into the wall. Naruto stared at it as Ragno pulled his fist out of the hole. Gripping the hilt of the large sword, Naruto couldn't help but wonder if he could take him in his current state. If he could summon up his holy power, then he might stand a chance. The only way he could beat him now was to out think him, something that even a child could do. However, Naruto had a better plan. He ran back to glowing reactor. Ragno followed him with his head before he was blinded by the overpowered reactor. The white light burned so brightly that it dried his eyes of all their fluids.

He screamed in pain as he held his face. Naruto ran past him just as the klaxons began to go off. _Not good._ The walls began to bubble and melt away as the heat rose rapidly. Naruto could feel the heat licking at his tail which he had no covering for. He'd have to get armor for his tail now. He came to the railing. He ran at full speed and jumped over it. He fell to the ground hard, rolled, got up, and quickly began running again without breaking stride. He rushed past fleeing Kig-Yar without stopping to cut them down. The structure began to melt away. The supporting structures began to cry out in agony from the weight before they began to snap in half. The Mega Turret was coming down.

Naruto came to a stop beside a wrecked Ghost. He jumped in the drivers' seat, hit the buttons, and it hummed to life. He pushed the controls forward, and it took off. Naruto looked over his shoulder just a white light exploded from the structure. He looked at it with his robotic eyes, a grin appearing on his lips. His eyes, although only partially robotic, were not affected by the bright light. They had the ability to polarize and fixate to the light according to how bright something was. His eyes were actually replacements by artificially creations. In other words, they had cloned his own eyes to their best of their abilities, and then added cybernetics to the rest of it. No other Sangheili besides doctors would dare take this operation unless they had been wounded so badly, yet gained honor by doing it.

The blast expanded, taking out Seraphs, Banshees, a single Cruiser, and a cluster of Anti-Air guns, turrets, and Anti-Air wraith tanks.

"_Uzumaki, please respond." _Ahieeel's voice came over his radio.

"â€|I'm here." He answered with a cough.

"_Rtas has taken out several Jiralhanae cruisers, but there are too many for us alone to deal with. He's sending a Phantom down to pick us up so we can return to High Charity to take out the Flood that have been taking command of our ships. You must hurry." _

Naruto cursed. That wasn't good. If the Flood got off the ring then who knew where they'd go? Once off, there'd be no way of containing them. "Alright. ETA: Damn quick!" Naruto hit the boost on the vehicle.

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The Intellect Eagle, a Frigate of the UNSC, was battle scared, beaten, ragged, and yet, was still fighting. Its captain, a man that could think two hundred moves ahead of anyone or anything on a good day, sat in the "Hot Seat" as it was commonly known to his old friend, Commander Jacob Keys. He missed him, but he wouldn't let that stop him. He was a captain of this ship. He had to act like one. Thinking about the sad days of then would only drag him down.

He ran a hand over his shaven head, sighing. He missed his long pineapple hair too. Shikaku missed everything about his past. He missed his wife, his son, and he missed his home. Earth wasn't his home. The Shinobi world had been his home until it was destroyed by the Brutes. He swore he'd kill them. He'd kill every last one of them for what they had done to his wife and child. He would kill them all. But right now, working as captain of his ship, he could only reflect on all the things he had done with his life.

He never loved anyone again. His first wife had been his only wife. He had had many chances to find new lovers, but he never followed through with it. He wasn't lazy about it, he just didn't want to. In some ways, he had ignored them again because he was afraid of losing the next woman he loved. He hadn't even slept with another woman since her death anyways. So he knew he didn't have an heir or child out there anymore. Shikamaru, his only son, was gone. His wife was gone. Everything was taken from him once, and he didn't want to feel that ever again.

He had had multiple chances to make new friends. He never did. He had gone out to bars with people while he was training to be a Navy man, but never really hung out with them. He was just thereâ€| in the shadows, like a ghost watching them. Jacob Keys had been the only somewhat friend he had. When he lost him, he really didn't know what to do. It wasn't like it mattered to him. He knew that in the end, they would lose the war. Maybe that was why he never made friends. He just didn't want to see them die and outlive them all.

But through all of his memories, there was nothing that he clung to more than his child's first words ever spoken. _"Troublesome." _He let out a dry laugh. Troublesome was a perfect word, even for now.

His Frigate, _The Intellect Eagle_, had no weapons left. Her crew had been ordered to evacuate. They were venting atmosphere at a high rate. The ship was almost stripped of its armor plating. It cried as if flew at max speed, pushing the reactor over the red line. Klaxons

of every kind were screaming at him. He was on a collision course with the massive Covenant ship. He was going to go down with the ship to protect nothing. Earth wasn't his home. He was only fighting for a memory from his past. He was fighting for his slain people. He didn't care about Earth. That was why he was preparing to do this. He would go down today.

He smiled a bloody smile as the large smoking ship came into view. _I'm coming to join you Yoshinoâ€¦ Shikamaruâ€¦ pleaseâ€¦ guide me to you. _The ship collided with the belly of the large ship. The damaged Covenant ship's hull was easy to go through. He was thrown forward, smashing into another chair, bending his arm in an unnatural way. Blood poured from a gash that appeared on his head from the impact. He didn't dare get up. There was no need to or time to. By the time he managed to roll over, he could feel his ship slamming into something else. He smiled a bloody smile as he saw his son and wife. They were both smiling at him with arms wide open. He closed his eyes as his ship, _The Intellect Eagle_ exploded into millions of pieces as it hit the reactor.

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Miranda watched _The Intellect Eagle_ sacrifice its self to stop the damaged Covenant ship from getting over another salvo round on them. She could do nothing for them. No words could express her sadness at losing another friend. She had looked up to him because of his wisdom and strategic mind. He could out think her dad any day of the week as far as she knew. She also knew, that deep down, he had no love for Earth. She knew that he was only fighting for his people back on the Shinobi world.

She closed her eyes, gave a silent prayer, and then saluted the destroyed Covenant ship as its reactor went critical and exploded. She remained giving him a salute for his valor, his braveryâ€¦ and his stupidity. You couldn't change the past. A life for a life wouldn't bring back the person you killed for. She knew that better than anyone maybe. Well, maybe everyone knew that. She wasn't sure. But she knew it well.

Rtas stared at her, his orange eyes blinking in confusion and mystery before understanding the meaning of her actions. She was showing respect for a fallen hero. In truth, he had saved them. _Shadow of Intent_ couldn't take much more of a beating. Its hull was damaged, and its shields were no more. The other USNC Frigates that remained were aiding them as best they could, but were leaning on his "shoulders" so to speak.

He couldn't voice his thanks for his sacrifice. It saved his life, along with his crew. He was proud to know that humans had honor to them. He had long thought that they had no honor. But after seeing them fight on Delta Halo, fight side by side with Naruto, fight to save Naruto and their own kind, and now sacrifice themselves for the sake of their world, he had no doubt in his mind that they had honor, even if it was hard to see. He closed his eyes, and bowed his head. He could do no more than this.

He looked up, surveying his crew. A few of them were doing the same. He was proud of these Sangheili that were doing this. He knew that they were proud to fight by their side now, even if they had lost friends because of them. But in this war, the biggest sinner hadn't

been the humans, it had been them. They killed the children of their Gods. The Forerunners that they worshiped were their parents, and they had been killing the very thing that they had sought to find for so long. _"There is heresy, and then there is heresy." _Elder Lak 'Vadamee had told this riddle to Thel when he had been given the Fleet of Particular Justice. Those words clung close to him now.

They had committed genocide on their Gods. That was heresy, no question about it. But they had listened to lies of the Prophets, believing in their words that these humans were destroyers of the sacred relics of their Gods. Not listening to the Prophets was heresy as well. The humans had done these things. They had destroyed them. They had moved them. They studied them when they found interest in them. And they even made some into weapons. They had also committed heresy in their eyes for destroying their parents' gifts.

Rtas took in a deep breath, and nodded to his crew as Sore looked up at him. "The Jiralhanae fleet is diving down into the atmosphere now. Shipmaster, shall we target them?"

"No. We could very well damage the human cities. We came here to show that we hold no ties with the Covenant anymore. We have done all we can." He replied. Lord Hood was on screen, watching the fleet go into the planet's atmosphere. "Human, we have done what we came to do. I must return to my people, and help them deal with the Flood. I will leave when our Phantoms have brought all of the humans to you." Kushina translated for him, and Lord Hood nodded. "Take us to their satellite station!" He barked.

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As the last of the Phantoms landed in the docking bay of the Cairo, Naruto couldn't help but close his eyes. He was tired. He had been fighting for his people for so long, and then turned against them in a moment of anger. And now he was working beside them again. Tsume was alive, but would not be fighting until she fully healed. She had major internal bleeding. She would need a new liver and lung. She was lucky she didn't drown in her own blood.

Naruto sighed as he leaned back against the large tree in the Bio Garden. He could hear Thel speaking with Lord Hood, Kushina translating every word for him. Rtas was with him, along with the old man, Hiruzen, and a few others. There were a few others that he had seen that made him wish he could have saved more of his things from High Charity. A man in a dark grey uniform with long sleeves, two red marks like tears ran from his eyes to his chin. His hair was cut short, but he could tell it was still spiky. Another was an old woman, really old looking actually. She looked to be about a hundred and twenty, but she moved, talked, and even punched the man in grey like she was fifty. She wore a white haori, green pants and a green shirt with the word "Gamble" on the back when she took her haori off. Her hair was cut short, just below her ears, and she had a smile that made him believe she was a mother to all of her wounded.

"Hey," Naruto was jerked from his thoughts, and forced to look up at Hinata as she stared down at him. He turned his head, not wanting to look at her. She sat down next to him, and looked down. "Xedrael explained everything to me." She told him bluntly. Naruto was silent. She closed her eyes. "Is it because you hate me?"

Naruto shook his head while exhaling. "No." He whispered it so low he doubted she heard it. She did.

"Then why are you not looking at me. Why did you avoid me? Why are you avoiding me even now? Do you regret what you had to do to protect us? Do you regret protecting us?"

"Iâ€¦" He stopped. He didn't hate her. She showed him the truth, and then something else. Her memories were jumbled by the war, but he had seen one that brought a smile to his face. He remembered it well. The first time someone acknowledged him. Someone had stolen his food on the first day at the Academy, and she had given him some of her own. That was just before the village was attacked. Before he was brought to High Charity. Before he was told the truth about what he was. He was monster. Why would she even want him now? He looked down at his clawed hand. Hinata gently took it into her own hands, and he blinked as she stared at it. "I don't hate you. I hate what I've become. I hate what I went through. I wanted to know why I was selected for this curse for so long that I could only think of finding my own people just to get the answers. But now that I have themâ€¦ I just don't know anymore. I'm not a human. I was never human to begin with."

"You're human, regardless of how you look."

"No. I was never human, Hinata. I was always a monster. People hated me for no reason. My people are the Sangheili. They raised me, trained me, cared for me, and treated me like family. I belong with them. When this war is over, I'm going back home, to their home where I know I'll be happy. Thel promised me a place on his wall in the Vadam Keep for my actions during the war since I lived there for most of my life after the first year in the Covenant."

"But you'll be lonely." She protested. He laughed bitterly. "You're hurtingâ€¦ even now, aren't you? You don't want to be alone because it hurts. But you believe that's the fate of a Jinchuuriki. You're wrong. My cousin, Neji, a Spartan, believed in the same thing once. A friend named Ash taught him otherwise. Ash taught him that fate could be broken. And you know what, he did break it. He became strong on his own will power. He didn't do it to avenge the clan, our people, or because he wanted power. He did it for the people he loved. You can break your fate as well. I've seen you fight. I know you can do it." She tightened her grip on his hand.

Naruto shook his head. "I lied to you. I lied to Thel, Rtas, Xedrael, Sore, and I almost got everyone killed when I lost control of Kyuubi. I even killed my own people because I hated them for what they did to me. I deserve death for my actions."

"No you don't." Hinata gripped his chin in her hands, and turned his head to face her. She smiled at him. "You saved my life more than once while I was up there. I saved your once. Let me save you again. I know you hurt, as do I. I have lost loved ones because of this war. I lost my friends. I even lost my boyfriend to this war. If it will save your life, I will marry you, and maybe one day, you will see me in the same light as I see you." She let him go, and walked off. Naruto sat there, alone, and sad.

He was being saved again. He was being saved by a female.

_I really am an idiot. _The station shook, and Naruto was thrown to the ground. He growled angrily as he got back up.

"_Lord Hood, we have a breach in section 6A! A single contact! It's a Brute Chieftain with a hammer!" _Someone shouted over the radio. Naruto looked up at the sign on the wall. 6A. He blinked. He didn't see anything.

A scream from where Hinata had walked to, had him up, and moving. He rounded the corner, and found Ragno standing over her, his hammer raised above his head. Naruto ran at him, his katana out, and digging into the floor before he drove it into his gut. Ragno looked down at her, blinked as he prepared to bring the hammer down. Naruto cursed. He let go of his weapon, grabbed Hinata, and jumped to safety as the hammer came down. The ground cracked and buckled where the hammer struck. Naruto rolled to his feet, his eyes wide and full of shock as he let her go.

Rtas, Thel, Johnson, the Demons, and Marines all poured into the room where they were. Naruto motioned for Hinata to go to them while he dealt with Ragno. "Didn't I kill twice already?!" Ragno roared in anger while bring his hammer down where Naruto was. Naruto jumped around the hammer, grabbed his massive muscle, and pulled up to kick him in the head. A few marines prepared to take a shot at him, but Thel raised a hand to stop them.

"This is something that he must deal with alone." Kushina translated for Thel. The marines looked back at the two as Naruto was backhanded away and skidded into the bulkhead with a sickening crunch.

Naruto got to his feet, shook his head, and then leaned backwards, evading the hammer blow that would have crushed his body. Ragno pulled the hammer out of the wall, raised it above his head, and prepared to crush Naruto. He rolled between his legs, and kicked him in the back of his knees. He went down hard, but elbowed Naruto in the side of the face when he tried to remove the sword that was still in his back. Naruto skidded back a few feet before rushing forward. He tackled into the back of Ragno, and knocked him to the ground. Naruto gripped the hilt of the sword, and began removing it. Ragno stood up, reached behind his back, and grabbed Naruto by his foot. Naruto cursed as he was thrown away with the sword in his hands. Ragno threw him into the far wall, and Naruto crumpled to the ground with a groan of pain.

Ragno smiled happily through blood stained teeth as he charged him, hammer held high over his head. Naruto cursed as he looked up at the hammer as it was being brought down. He lunged between his legs, and dove through the wide gap of his legs. He skidded on his back a few feet, watching as the hammer smashed into the ground where he had been. Ragno roared in retaliation as he pulled the hammer out of the ground. Naruto was quick to get back on his feet. Ragno threw a fist at him, and Naruto smiled.

"You really are stupid." He jumped over his fist, and landed behind him with a blood soaked sword. Ragno howled in pain as his arm fell to the ground, bleeding out. He spun around, his hammer held straight out as he tried to knock Naruto away. Naruto dropped down to the ground, dodging the hammer, but was kicked in the side of the head, and sent crashing into the bulkhead. He got up slowly, bleeding

trickling from his mouth and head as he did. He gripped the sword tightly as Ragno rushed him with the hammer held over his head.

Naruto glared at him as he ran him down. At the last second, Naruto ducked under his swing, and jumped forward while cutting through his stomach. The blade almost cut him in half. Almost was the key word. Ragno cried out in pain before spinning around, his body looking oddly funny as it jerked back together. Naruto raised the sword, confusion now written in his eyes. That should have killed him. Was her really _too _stupid to know how to die?

"Fine. I'll just have to cut you into tiny pieces then." Naruto rushed him, his crimson eyes bleeding from the blow to his head. He drove the sword through his heart again. Ragno screamed in pain as he tried to swing at Naruto. Naruto dodged the blow by doing a no-handed cartwheel that hit him in the face. Naruto spun around his hammer swing, gripped his sword that was still in his chest, and twisted it before removing it. Ragno knocked him away, and Naruto skidded to a stop beside the ship. _You have to be kidding me?! He _IS _too stupid to know how to die! _Naruto stood up, and touched something that got his attention. He looked down, and grinned. He could take him out now.

Ragno roared at him, and charged him. Naruto stabbed his sword all the way to the guard in the ship, and jumped away as Ragno swung the hammer. His movements were sluggish now. He was losing too much blood, and even if he couldn't understand why, his body knew why, just not his brain. Naruto grabbed the cable, jumped onto the back of Ragno, punching him in the head a few times to stun him before tying the cable around his throat. It was just tight enough that it wouldn't slip off. Ragno grabbed him, and threw him away. Naruto rolled to his feet, a grin still on his face as he did before breaking into a full run towards the other end of the cable. He grabbed it, jumped over Ragno's wide swing, and stopped beside his sword. He tied it to the hilt, ran to back of it, and hit the controls that would make it back up. He ran out, and was kicked into the ground by Ragno. The ship began to move.

Naruto cursed. A brilliant plan so long as he lived. He looked back at the others. They were all taking cover behind a blast door. Naruto wouldn't live when the ship exited the hull. He would die when the vacuum of space got him. Thel blinked a few times, watching him. Naruto could see him blinking. He knew that he had already thought of a way to save him, or for him to save himself. Naruto grinned. Yeah, he could still live. Ragno lifted his foot so he could crush him with greater ease. Naruto rolled away, grinning as he did. He quickly got to his feet, and made a break for the other sealed door. Ragno turned to face him, and prepared to run after him when he jerked against the cable. It took him a full two seconds to realize what was holding him before he broke free of it. By that time, Naruto had part of the door open, and was already halfway inside. Ragno rushed him. The ship came out. The air was sucked out. The door sealed shut. Ragno blinked once before he was thrown out into the void of space.

From the window, Naruto smiled while coughing. He outsmarted him with a suicide tactic. Naruto was certain he'd get hounded for that. But he didn't care. Ragno was dead. Ragno was also one of the Jiralhanae that had led the attack on his people. He was happy to know that he was dead. Now that he was gone, that just left one more with Tartarus

and Minashu dead. Naruto's eyes rolled into the back of his head, and darkness took him.

(-)

Naruto awoke to the sight of Rauk standing over him in the medical bay of _Shadow of Intent_. Naruto blinked his eyes, leaned up, and glared at him. "We really need to stop this crap." Rauk laughed, along with Ahriel, Zabuza, Mikoto, and Yugito. Naruto blinked twice as he stared them down. "Why are you here?"

"Rtas has agreed that they are mighty warriors. And as such, has put them on your team." Rauk explained. Naruto muttered a low curse. "The Demon is here because her people believe that she will be of some use to us. It will also show them that we are serious about helping them. She is also a part of your team." Naruto grabbed Rauk by his chest armor, and pulled him down close.

"Did Rtas ask of this?" Rauk hesitated for a full two seconds, and Naruto growled angrily. "I'm going to kill him." He swore.

(-)

A Slipspace rupture appeared in the void of space as a new battle began. More Jiralhanae ships had appeared, and they were bombarding the planet with their weapons. The Dreadnought had come to Earth, bringing the Prophet of Truth with it. John, hiding away in the ship, tried his radio again. "This is Spartan-117. Can anyone read me? Over."

"_Master Chief? You mind telling me what you're doing on that ship?!" _It was Lord Hood, and he sounded shocked, amazed, and proud all at the same time.

"Sir. Finishing this fight."

Omake

Naruto was sitting in the hanger bay of _Shadow of Intent_ while looking over all of his collectibles. Johnson was beside him, looking through a box of clothing for the others survivors that didn't have clothes just yet. Naruto had a lot of stuff. He had probably enough old stuff that he could be a millionaire if he wanted to. There were so many old items that were worth a great deal to, any human. He had an old metal coin that had a picture of a woman holding a baby one side and an eagle on the other with its wings spread wide open in flight.

Naruto cracked his neck, and sighed. He pulled out a black box that was about two feet long. He looked it over for a moment before throwing it away. It broke on impact, and Johnson turned to look at it. "Why'd you do that?"

Naruto looked him over. "Do what?" Johnson motioned towards the box. Naruto shrugged. "I never got it to work, and I don't know what it does." He explained.

"We'll, it's called a stereo, mostly used back in the twenty first century before it was replaced by a device called the iPod. Now we actually use our PDAs with chips to hold our music. I use mine the

same way." He wished he had his actually. He left it on _In Amber Clad_, which was on High Charity in a wall. He wished they just went to it, found his stuff, and retrieved it. He would give anything to listen to his music right now. He would just about-

"I'm so excited! That I just can't-" A yelp sounded before the music stopped. Johnson looked back to see a floating Huragok hovering over the broken device. Naruto had destroyed it with a sword, silencing the box instantly while he glared at it. He poked it once, making sure it was dead before shaking his head.

"That's a good one too." Johnson whispered sadly. Naruto snorted at him and the dancing Sangheili in the background before his eyes caught the happy Marines and ODSs that were running up to him.

"Thanks man. We owe you big time for that." One of them proclaimed. Naruto blinked. "Sergeant tortures us with his music all the time. You destroying that thing saved us a big headache. If you ever need us for anything, just let us know, and we'll drop in, kick ass, and save your ass." Naruto glared at him, and signed something to the Huragok. It gave out a low belching sound before its tentacles probed the device, working its magic before putting it back together. "What are you-"

Naruto grabbed the box, walked over to Johnson, and handed it to him. "Here. I have no love for it, but I think you do. You can have it."

"Alright!" Johnson proclaimed happily as he hit the play button. The Marines instantly began moaning while screaming at Naruto. The ODSs were searching for something to destroy the black box with. "If you ever need my help, let me know, and I'll be happy to oblige." He began dancing to the tune, making his men scream while they tried to run away.

"Why did you do that?" Hinata asked curiously.

"If it causes them pain and misery, I'll endure anything." He replied while going back through the boxes for more clothing. The long line of survivors waiting for clothes just stared at him as he handed out more clothing to them while a few went back to watching the dancing Sangheili.

A/N

I own nothing.

17. Chapter 17

Chapter 17

"Do we have a signal yet?" Lord Hood asked carefully. He was onboard _Forward Unto Dawn_ at the last remaining shipyard still on Earth. From there, he could still keep track of all coordinating efforts to push the Covenant back. The Elite strike teams, along with the Spartan III's strike team, had done considerable damage to the Covenant's defenses, but the damage didn't last long. They had quickly brought back most of the heavy weapons, except for the Mega Turrets.

They were already beginning construction on a new one, but at the current rate, he doubted they'd have up in time for what he had planned.

The ONI Spook that had been at the meeting with the Elites and Lord Hood, turned to face him, shaking his head. "No sir. They're still having trouble dealing with the Brutes that are in the area. A team of ODSs are working with the Marines on the ground to get his landing coordinates, but it doesn't look so good right now." He replied slowly. If there was ever one thing that an ONI Spook hated, it was not knowing something. They prided themselves on being able to tell you anything and everything about someone or something. They could find your worst nightmares, bring them to life, and tell you things about yourself you only thought you knew. But right now, as they waited for the team to track Sierra-117's landing zone, he could honestly say that he was worried.

"Jiraiya, do you have a backup plan for finding him when he lands? If he lands and we don't get to him before the Covenant do, then our plans for taking back our planet will be greatly compromised." Hood told him soundly. Jiraiya sighed as he closed his eyes. Working as a spook had very few disadvantages to them. Right now, this was one of those disadvantages that he hated: Coming up with a backup plan should the first plan fail. If the team failed then they might as well just kiss their asses all, goodbye.

"No sir. But I know this plan will work. They can do it." He prayed that they could actually. He had no doubt that they could. But there was that lingering moment where he thought he had made a mistake. Ever since he became an ONI spook, he had been questioning everything he did. He became a member of ONI for his stealth and spy skills. These were unique traits that ONI liked. They liked people that could appear out of nowhere, sneak up on the world, say something, and then vanish before you knew they were there. But the other reason he joined was because of his injuries.

Remembering them, he gripped his chest mentally, wishing the pain would go away. It wouldn't. He had been shot in the chest by a spike round, and had to be operated on while they were taking him up to the Frigate Forever in the Sun. By the time they got him to the ICU, he was already out of the danger zone. He had awoken to the sight of a tired and worn out Tsunade sleeping loudly in a chair next to him. He was happy to see her, but she was covered with burns. When she awoke, he learned that she had been near a plasma grenade explosion that had given her a high dose of radiation. Her chakra network had been destroyed because of it, and she had to have transplants for damaged organs, just like him. Because of their new organs, and radiation damage to their bodies, they lost the ability to control chakra. Kakashi, Anko, and Asuma had been the only ones to still control it. The seven Jinchuuriki that had been rescued from the planet could still call upon their Bijuu's power, but they never gave them training on how to use it, and they rarely ever used it.

"We got a signal!" Someone cried.

Jiraiya began typing on his computer. He loved his computer as well because it made it a lot easier for him to store all his research on his books which were a big hit with all the Marines and Navy men. As he began typing, he smiled. "Got him. Coordinates have been set, and Sergeant Major Avery Johnson is on rout to pick him up. ETA is two

minutes until touchdown." He exclaimed. They had a fighting chance now.

Everyone began clapping until Lord Hood spoke. "We're not out of the woods just yet. He has to survive his crash landing." The cheering stopped, and everyone began issuing commands to other squads, diverting them all to the current base in New Mombassa under the command of Miranda Keys.

(-)

Master Chief sighed as he looked around for something to use as a shield. The Dreadnought was bathed in flames from its reentry, and he doubted that he could withstand them alone without some sort of protection. He needed something. He needed something big and sturdy to use. The ship shook, and he fell to a knee, denting the floor of his hiding spot inside the ship. The seams where the floor had been welded down came apart, and were lifted up. He stared at it for a moment, and then gripped it tightly. They had to be about four or five kilometers from the surface now.

He tugged at it a few more times before it finally broke apart. He was thrown to the ground, but quickly got back up, holding his makeshift shield that would save his life from the long fall. Fred had done this once. He fell about eight kilometers, even landed before the Pelican that was transporting them hit the ground. He was certain that if he wanted to have bragging rights over anything, that one would do it. No one was that crazy, not even Master Chief. And yet here he was, about to do the same damn thing out of a burning ship.

He ran to the edge, uncertain of how far away he was from the surface now. He looked at the large piece of metal, eyeing to see if this was a bright idea. No choice really. It was either jump or wait for the ship to land and hope like hell he could get away from an army of Brutes, Jackals, Elites (He doesn't know), Grunts, and Hunters.

He made ready to jump. "They let me pick. Did I ever tell you that?" _John closed his eyes, praying for a miracle as he jumped out of the burning ship with his shield out front. He looked like he was shoulder tackling it really. The shield of four inch metal quickly began to hit up as it caught the flames of the burning Dreadnought. "Choose whichever Spartan I wanted." _John grunted against the smoldering flames and the force of keeping his shield in position. "You know me. I did my research. Watched as you become the soldier we needed you to be." _John could feel his grip weakening on the shield. "Like the others, you were strong and swift and brave. A natural leader. But you had something they didn't. Something no one saw, but me." _Chief could taste blood in his mouth as he set his gel layer to max pressure. The gel layer at max level should take most of the impact and protect his internal organs from damage. He hoped it did this anyway. His vision began to go blurry as he watched the stars around him. The heat from the flames had drained his shields, and he could feel them burning away at his skin. Blistered appeared, popped, and reappeared from the licking flames. "Can you guess? Luck." _John could see floral just before he felt his body slam against the ground, skid through the dirt, trees, and rocks before coming to a halt on a pill of built dirt from his impact. His armor was hissing from the rapid cooling it was going through from being in the small puddle of water. He saw a younger version of himself

playing with the coin that Dr. Halsey had lost to him. _"Was I wrong?" _Darkness took him.

(-)

"This ain't good."

"Damn. How far did he fall?"

"Two kilometers. Easy."

The sound of a lighter being clamped shut echoed around the trees as the Marines all stared at the Master Chief as he lay motionless where he hit the ground. It had taken them only minutes to track him down. They had to move through the jungle to get to him, and find him the old fashion way since the canopy blocked most of their eyes in the sky. But it didn't take them long to find him. Avery took a puff from his Sweet William cigar, favored by all Marines in the Corp. "Stay sharp." He ordered.

The Marines took up defensive positions while the Corpsmen brought out a small military/technician laptop. He opened it up, and began to link with the Chief's armor. He noticed multiple problems with the suit alone. It would take about a week to repair it all, if they ever had the time. They had a new one waiting for him on _Forward Unto Dawn_, but they doubted they had even the time to get him up there, refitted, and back on his feet.

"Corpsman?"

He shook his head slowly. "His armor's locked up. Gel layer could have taken most of the impact..." He typed a few commands into the panel, and the Chief's arms fell with a mechanical strain sound to them. He could tell that just from the sound that the circuits and joints had been damaged. He wondered if his shield generator even survived the fall. He doubted it. "I don't know Sergeant Major." He added a second later.

Johnson took a long drag from his cigar as he leaned down to the polarized faceplate of his friend. He stared into the golden plate for a moment, hoping to see something move. He blew smoke over the vents where his oxygen would come out if it realized he wasn't in a vacuum anymore. Nothing happened. He sighed. That wasn't good. That meant only two things. He was either dead, killed by the impact or extreme heat, or he was unconscious, which wouldn't be much fun. They'd have to blow the canopy up in order to get him out. They didn't have enough firepower to get a pelican in, or they'd just pick his ass up, and throw him in the aft of it.

Johnson put his cigar back in his mouth as he reached around to grab the chip where Cortana was. He yanked it out quickly, the Chief's head jerking with the motion. "Radio for VTOL, heavy lift gear," Johnson looked down at the chip, noticing that it missed its certain light blue shin, indicating that Cortana wasn't inside it. He let out another depressed sigh. "We're not leaving him here." He stared at the chip before something grabbed his forearm. Looking down, he found the Master Chief holding him, and slowly trying to get to his feet.

"Yeah. You're not." He replied as Johnson helped him up. He kept his

grip on his forearm as he looked around. He could already tell he had a few cracked or broken ribs, and his muscles were sore around his shoulder blades and arms. He probably had a few torn muscles as well. Nothing a Spartan couldn't handle. It wasn't like this was the first time anyways. He'd endured worse in the past.

"Crazy fool." Johnson suppressed a light chuckle as he poked him in the arm. "Why do you always jump? One of these days, you're gonna land on something that's as stubborn as you are. And I don't do bits and pieces." He smacked him on the shoulder, a grin appearing on his face before he was reminded of the chip in his hand. For a high-tech piece of machinery that could crush his head with just two fingers, it gently took the chip from his hand, and scanned it over sadly. "Where is she, Chief? Where's Cortana?"

John stared at the tiny chip in his hands. He honestly regretted listening to her. She was important to him. Everything could be destroyed, thrown away, or even sold, but not her. He wouldn't give her up for anything. _"Don't make a girl a promiseâ€¦ If you know you can't keep it." _Her words rung through his head, and he closed his eyes, regret hitting him again. He may as well have just deleted her. For all he knew, she was gone now.

"She stayed behind." No. She was alive. She had to be. He inserted the chip back into his helmet, telling himself that he'd go after her once this was over.

Johnson sighed. This was a problem. They needed Cortana as well. Without her, Lord Hood was at a disadvantage. Albeit wasn't much, but it was a problem. John released his hold on his arm, and Johnson looked back at the Corporal. "Corporal, make it quick." He ordered while getting out of his way. The man slid down in front of Master Chief, a computer pad still in his hands.

"Sorry sirâ€¦ You're armor's still in partial lockdown." He began while pressing a few buttons on the device.

John shook his head as he looked around. Something just didn't feel right to him. Everything was just too fast. He knew that the Elites would have found him first, no questions asked. They were skilled in tracking down targets. Maybe he was just nervous. Maybe he was a little shook up from his jump. He wondered what Cortana might have said when he came up with the idea. He was certain it would have been something that would talk him out of it.

A Marine slid down a bit on the slippery ground, a lazy walk in his step as if he was drowsy. He could see the tree branches move behind him, and he narrowed his eyes on it. A faint image appeared a split second later, like a ghost appearing out of the darkness. The Chief's reflexes kicked in, causing him to miss the nod of respect from Johnson to the Arbiter. He grabbed Johnson's pistol, pushing him aside and two more Marines before getting up to him, pressing the barrel of the gun through his "split chin" while twisting it as Johnson called out to him.

"Chief, wait! The Arbiter's with us!" Johnson ran up to him, gripping his arm to pull it down. He hoped he could anyways. The Arbiter, as agreed, if was still alive when Rtas and the other Sangheili had destroyed all of the Flood and Flood ships, returned, they would acknowledge the truce between them. So if he died by John's hands, it

would mean they'd start attacking them again, and they didn't need that. Still, Johnson knew he could pull his arm down. "Come on now. We got enough to worry about without you two trying to kill each other." He added.

John slowly pulled the weapon from his mouth, his eyes narrowing on Johnson for a moment before agreeing that he was no threat. If he was a threat, he wouldn't have become visible. So that counted for something. But still, John shoved him a bit, letting him know in a silent, Spartan way, that he didn't trust him just yet.

Thel shook his head, his mandibles moving in a way that would have seemed as if he was spitting something out his mouth. "Were it so easy." Thel turned away, passing through a few more shadows that moved with the trees. They became visible while Thel added, "We must go. The Jiralhanae have our scents," turning into the familiar forms of Sasuke and Konohamaru.

John stared at them, wondering what had happened over the last three days he'd been in space, heading this way. He understood how they got here first, but he didn't understand how the Elites and Humans were working together. He put that in the back of his mind as he watched Johnson reach out to take a Marine's assault rifle. "Then they must love the scent of a real man!" He spoke up, handing the weapon over to the Spartan. John snatched it out of his hands, a rare display of anger showing in his actions. Sasuke watched Thel walk past the remains of John's makeshift surfboard. He was impressed.

"_You okay?" _Sasuke asked him over a secure COM channel. John just grunted over the COM channel. He was too thirsty to really wanna talk at the moment. He was hungry too. Sasuke took the silent message as an open act of hostilities, but he could understand. Master Chief didn't know what had happened in the last few days. A lot of things had happened. Some of them had been bad, but there had been a few good things.

Johnson took his rifle from his back, flipping the safety off. "First squad, you're my scouts. Move out, quiet as you can." He motioned for them to start walking, and John strained against his bruised legs. Yeah, he pulled a few muscles down there as well. He could walk and run. He could still fight. He'd live. It was too far away from his heart to kill him.

It took him a moment to work through his pain though. Jumping over the fallen down tree with moss covering it was a rather big pain. He was sure wishing he had some pain killers now actually. He opened a secure channel to Sasuke's team. "I'll ask other questions later. But I need to know, can he be trusted?"

"_For the most part, we need to keep him alive, or the Elites will come back gunning for us because we killed their leader." _Konohamaru replied simply. John sighed. He had spent years killing them, and now he was being forced to protect one. He really didn't want to. In fact, he hadn't even noticed that his gun was leveled at his back. When he did, he resisted the urge to pull the trigger. Konohamaru had neither denied nor confirmed that he was trust worthy, but a gut feeling told him he was.

"Bravo Team, this is Johnson, we got him. We're falling back to the extraction point." John looked over at the Sergeant, happy to know

that there were others out here that had come looking for him.

"_Rodger that. Reynolds out." _

John lowered his gun a bit, and walked around a large pool of water and under a small ledge of stone. The vines covering it looked like a spider web with all the moss and water that was glistening in the sunlight. He was soon back into a full run, grunting only every few minutes before they came up to a narrow passage that could hold about four people width ways. If they were going to get ambushed, this would be the place. His tactical mind had him looking around, checking the canopy for anything.

He checked his ammo count on his ammo reader. It read a full clip. He only had one clip, the one inside. He'd have to make every shot count.

The team of Marines, Spartans, and one Elite, melded from shadow to shadow, checking each corner for any possible threat. John kept his gaze locked with the back of Thel, wondering if this was just a trick. Years of fighting made him just want to shot him and ask questions later. If they were allies, then he had to stop thinking like he was an enemy.

A red light appeared on his HUD, and everyone froze. The Marines froze last. Johnson pressed his back against the hard rock wall, looking up through the canopy into the bright blue sky that was humming with anti-gravity pods. This was a bad sign. The enemy knew where they were, or where they might be. That meant problems. John could fight, that was certain. But how well could he fight? He fell two kilometers at God knows what speed? His armor was damaged, but not enough to keep him fighting. The corporal had done some repairs, mostly an upgrade to his translating systems. But could it withstand whatever was up ahead. For that matter, who was sending the signal?

"_Sergeant Major, Phantom inbound." _It was Haku. John had worked with him once, but from what Cortana had pulled up on them after their first encounter with the Spartan III's, he had to admit he was impressed. He was ranked fifth for sharpshooting. He came in second to Olivia or O as the silent vowel in her namesake sounded, to stealth. The reason their team hadn't stuck around for the final test for bragging rights had been because their team wasn't in the top three, count. They had ranked in the top ten.

Johnson sighed. That wasn't good news. "If we stay together, we might get spotted. "Chief, go with the Arbiter and Spartans. We'll meet back up at LZ." John nodded, and proceeded with caution before coming to a stop at an opening. With a lake feed waterfall, large cliff face on the other side next to the waterfall, and large boulders with tree trunks that ranged from every size. Johnson looked over to where some rocks moved, and raised his rifle, as did the others. A green light blinked on John's HUD, and he nodded approvingly.

Johnson shook his head at the Spartan. He was completely invisible. He might as well have just been a ghost, as no one could see him. John would give him credit though. Linda was a pro sniper. No one but her could say they were lone wolves. This guy, Haku, might have that ability as well, but that was because of his Photo Reflective Panels

built into his armor. He doubted he could snipe without a spotter like Linda. Linda didn't need one at all.

The Sergeant Major jogged silently through the ankle deep water with his Marines, each trailing a few seconds behind him before coming to the rock wall. He motioned for them to climb while he guarded their asses. One by one, they climbed to the top. Johnson took one last look around before climbing up as well. He grunted with effort before reaching the top. He had been at the start of the war, and was beginning to wear down in his old age. But he wouldn't let it show. He'd kick and bite if he had to before he gave up.

Once at the top, he motioned for them to do a quick recon of the area. Nothing was in their field. He turned back to the Chief. "Listen, Chief. If the Brutes do have our scent, then Bravo Team may need some help. Find them, and get them to extraction point with the others." He ordered.

John nodded, tightening his grip on his assault rifle. He had a mission to complete. He wouldn't fail. He'd win, even if it killed him.

Thel jumped up to where Haku was, giving him a slight nod as he flickered out of existence. He belly crawled to a tree, taking up sniping position in its shadow. Even if the Brutes could see him; in the shadows it would make him a harder target to get. Plus, he was camouflaged quite well, making him much harder to see.

He sighted through the scope, checking the place out while the others got into position to move; waiting for his signal. Sasuke stuck to the low ground, creeping around large boulders and trees before stopping in the shadow of a large boulder that had a tree trunk turned over above the small stream of water. Konohamaru was with John, becoming his shadow as they jogged through the shadows of the far left side of the place. When they were up near Thel, they checked things out as well.

There was a hiss on his radio, and it crackled to life in a whisper. _"Brute leader up ahead with Grunts for backup. It's got Power Armor." _He reported silently. John gave him a red light. He wouldn't fire, not yet anyways. John gave single hand signals to the team, and they complied. Thel looked at them in confusion before figuring out what they were doing.

Haku sighted the Brute's left eye through his scope, and grinned while giving John an amber light signal, telling him he was ready. Sasuke pulled a single Fragmental grenade from his pouch, gave the amber light that he was ready, and prepared to throw it at the walking Grunts as they walked through the water. Konohamaru sighted down his assault rifle, looking over the exit passage for when they unleashed hell. He gave the amber signal, and John replied by giving them a green signal.

They opened fire. Haku squeezed off two rounds, the first round spinning the Brute's head around, the second tearing through his jugular, spraying dark blood out the back the back. Sasuke chunked his grenade into the middle of the Grunt platoon, raised his assault rifle, and watched them scatter as the grenade exploded in a flash of thunder and light. He opened fire, tearing through the survivors and dead just in case they got back up. Konohamaru policed any that came

running at him with a single shot to the head from his weapon. John and Thel opened fire with combined fire, killing the remaining Grunts.

John gave the red light, and they all stopped firing. Haku was quickly on his feet, and gone from sight totally. John tried looking for him, but decided not to. If he was as good as his files claimed, then he was certain he'd be alright, and not get caught. The others slowly began moving up with John when they linked up. They split into a wide formation, covering each other's backs as they checked high and low for any targets. They didn't see any.

The hum of anti-gravity pods sounded just over the waterfall that led to the ocean, and a red light hit their HUDs instantly. They all jumped into cover. John groaned inwardly from the impact with the boulder he took cover behind when he slammed down onto his ribs. He shook the pain off as he heard multiple splashes. Another set of anti-gravity pods sounded, but further down. John groaned. That meant more targets. He was already in enough pain, he didn't need any more.

John peered around his cover, and spotted the single blue armored Brute that was holding a spike rifle. He looked for the others. Thel was beside him, taking cover behind another boulder on the other side of the small stream between them. He was holding his carbine tightly, and nodded when he met his gaze. John looked around for the others. He couldn't see them. That made him slightly nervous. He checked the ammo in his weapon. He didn't have much left.

The Phantom hovered over them for a few more seconds before banking right, and leaving the airspace. The other Phantom left as well. John gave a green light to his teammates, and instantly the air was filled with tracer rounds that tore through the Grunts. He looked to where the rounds came from. He could barely make out the image of a Spartan on a rundown building. It had to have been a former outpost or guard tower. The other rounds were coming from a window just under the building. A thin line of smoke, barely noticeable to the naked eye, was coming from behind a tree.

"The Prophets are liars, but you are fools to trust them." Thel muttered to the corpse of a dead Brute as John raised his rifle, took aim, and found no targets.

He sighed. That was good. He didn't have to waste any ammo. He had only half a clip left. Haku gave out another red light, and John acknowledged it as he ran up to where some boulders were. He jogged through the water, slammed into the boulder, cracking it, looked over one corner of it, and spotted his targets. He spun around to the other side to search for flanking targets. His motion tracker was off. It wouldn't matter anyways. They didn't work too well in a jungle when everything moved constantly. Even with upgrades it could still be set off by the motion of big objects.

When he rested his head on the boulder, he found three floating clips of ammo. He blinked once before he noticed it was Sasuke. Sasuke was using his camouflage to blend in with everything. John took the ammo, placed it on his melted belt, checked his current ammo, and nodded his thanks. Sasuke was already gone.

He gave them a countdown with his lights: Red for first, amber for

second, and green for the third. They spun around out of cover, opened fire on the enemy, and took them down. Grunts were hit first, the armor piercing rounds jerking their bodies around and making them dance to the bullets. Haku sighted the Brute in blue with his rifle and squeezed off two rounds. The first tore part of its jaw off, and the second bore right through its skull. It dropped backwards hard. Two more Grunts came running at them from behind a boulder, two plasma grenades in their hands, and lit. John took aim, fired, and peppered the first. Thel took out the second. They dropped the grenades, and they exploded in a flash of thunder and heat.

"Damn. Brutes are tough." Haku remarked. He stood up, still hidden, and began sneaking along the wall as the others fanned out.

"The Grunts ain't any slouches either." Konohamaru added. "They must be putting something in their tanks." He joked.

"The Grunts new-found courage is but fear. When we are victorious, all who serve the Prophets shall be punished." Thel promised. John walked past him, stepping over the corpse of a dead Brute as he did. Thel didn't take this as an open act of hostility. He understood what it meant.

Small torches lined the floor of the moss covered cave they entered, Haku running ahead of John, serving as their scout for the mission. They all slowed down as they came near the end of the cave. John winced as his eyes quickly adjusted from a dark environment to a fully lit one. His mask hadn't polarized fast enough to compensate. His helmet was damaged as well. It was still in working order, but he'd need to get repairs before doing another mission.

When his eyes adjusted to the light outside, he spotted sleeping Grunts. He hated this already. Sleeping Grunts were easy to get by, but it was what was behind them in the trees that had him cursing. Jackals were perched in the trees, all armed with beam rifles. This wasn't going to be easy. John quickly looked around. There were explosive fusion barrels for power behind a few Brutes that were ordering Grunts around. A few were carrying supplies for a radio antenna. They were probably going to try and get their radio frequency for their uses.

He looked at his team from the shadows, or at least where he hoped they were. Haku he wasn't very worried about. If he could hide from him, then he had nothing to really worry about. John wasn't the fastest, strongest, or even the brightest of the Spartans he graduated with. He was just average except for the fact that he was a leader and that he had the craziest of luck.

"_Sleepers. Take them out, nice and quietly." _Sasuke ordered over TEAMCOM. John knew he was ordering his team, not him, but he still couldn't help but feel as though he was being undermined by him.

John moved from shadow to shadow as he walked up to the first sleeping Grunt on a ledge. It was snoring peacefully. John glanced around for a moment from where he was in the shadows, and stared at all the trees, searching for any more Jackals. He could only see two, and he hoped that's all there was. He didn't need to get shot up just yet by any unseen targets.

He crept up to the sleeping Grunt and smashed the butt of his gun into its temple. It toppled over, bleeding from its crushed in skull. John quickly pulled back into the shadows, looked around, and found a drop into a small dark cave. Haku sent him a green light, and he sighed. He was obviously watching him from somewhere unseen. John jumped down into the dark cave, jogged to the exit, and peeked around the corner. More sleepers sat in hiding places that would be hard to see for the Jackals and Brutes.

John sent a green light to his team after killing the first three. They others were awake, patrolling in pairs, and receiving orders from watching Brutes. The team opened fire. Thel was beside Haku, both aiming at the snipers in the trees. Thel got two of them while Haku got the three hidden ones. Sasuke chunked a grenade at the fusion barrels, counted down two seconds, and ran around the corner just as they explode, sending hot shrapnel flying into the screaming Grunts. The Brutes tried to maintain order, but it was already too late. One went down thanks to Konohamaru's well place plasma grenade to its face. The other went down via Haku's sniping skills.

John ran in, full speed, his rifle pointed up front, searching for a target, and opened fire on shield holding Jackals. They came to a skidding stop, raised their shields, and overlapped them for better defense. John swept low, taking their feet out with short controlled bursts. They crumpled to the ground with missing legs. John ran up to them and over them with his boots. He crushed them with his large body weight. Weighing in at nearly a ton had its advantages.

More Grunts ran at them from shadows, some carrying needlers, others carrying, plasma pistols and grenades as they ran at them. Sniper fire took out the suicide Grunts while combined assault rifle fire took out the others. When it was all over, John and Sasuke policed the wounded, reliving them of their weapons and grenades. Thel and Haku appeared a second later, each reloading their weapons. Konohamaru was checking out the radio antenna they had been setting up. John stared at him before watching as Konohamaru just stuck a charge of C4 on it. He pressed a switch, and it blew up in a flash of light and thunder.

"_They were jamming our signals." _He reported. John nodded, amazed that he hadn't thought of doing that. Konohamaru pressed a few buttons on his gauntlet while Haku gave John and Sasuke the two Jackal shield gauntlets. They strapped them to their arms, pressed a few buttons, checking to make sure they worked before turning them off. There was no telling how long they'd last, so he'd have to make the most of them.

Thel took point with Haku, both becoming invisible as Johnson's voice came over the radios. _"Pelicans are at the river. But I can't reach Bravo. Find them, and get them to the extraction point. Over." _The radio hissed and crackled before going dead.

Thel and Haku stopped moving, along the others to catch up. Chief reloaded his assault rifle, looked at the team, and gave them a green light. They all turned around the corner into a bright open patch of land. A jackal with a beam rifle was on each side of a bridge made from a fallen over tree, and a Brute in golden armor with Reynolds stood in the center, holding him up by his neck. John gave them all a green light.

"_Show me its location." _The Brute's words were translated though John's helmet as Haku took aim with his rifle, and pulled the trigger just as Reynolds gave a reply.

"Kissâ€| myâ€| ass." He growled out through the choking hold the Brute had him by. The round smacked into the side of its face, letting him go, and spinning the Brute around. Haku fired again, this time killing him by taking out half of his face. John and Sasuke targeted the Jackal on the left while Thel and Konohamaru targeted the Jackal on the right. The two Jackals went down, and with all the gunfire going on, hidden Grunts ran out of cover, screaming and flailing their arms as their leader hit the ground in front of them. John opened fire again, killing the Grunts with ease. As the last of them hit the ground, the team ran up to the winded and wounded Sergeant Reynolds as he picked up a spike rifle. "Brute Chieftainâ€| Phantomâ€| pinned us down. Killed my men." He replied slowly.

"Don't worry; we'll get you out of here." Konohamaru told him. The man nodded his thanks, and motioned for them to follow him. Haku took point though, switching from his sniper to the assault rifle. Haku gave them a red light when he switched weapon, and they all froze while taking cover. Haku pressed forward a bit, pressing his back against the hard stone of the left corner. In the shadows of the small cave were a group of terrified Grunts. Haku got Chief's attention, and gave him the signal for Grunts. He pulled a grenade from his pouch, and tossed it in the cave with them. They yelped in surprise before it went off. He gave them a green light, and they all rushed in.

Nothing lived.

John looked around, finding the remains of a few Marines in the corner. They had teeth marks all over them. They had been eaten or were being eaten by the hungry Grunts. Beside their bodies were ammo and weapons. John quickly began picking up the ammo and weapons. He took the BR55HB SR rifle, checked its ammo, and slung the assault rifle on his back. The others just waited for him to get what he wanted. When John was finished, he felt safer. He looked around, and nodded his thanks. Haku gave him a light nod before motioning for them to continue.

Konohamaru took point, walked up the hill, and came face to face with a screaming Jackal. He punched the first one in the back, breaking its ugly face and killing it, and then jumped to the side the others opened fire before the target could put its shield in place. Two Brutes came out of a cave in the back, one instantly going down when Haku opened fire with his sniper rifle. The other took cover while ordering the Grunts to charge in. John and Sasuke killed them while Konohamaru bounced a frag grenade off the wall, and made it land in front of the Brutes' hiding spot. It gave a loud roar of anger before jumping out of the way and straight into Haku's sights. It was quickly put down.

Reynolds whistled at their teamwork. Thel walked up behind him, shaking his head. They didn't need any more problems.

They quickly began pushing through the open field, heading straight for the cave in the back. It was lit by red torches, some still burning brightly, as now dimming. When they got to the edge, it branched down into another set of caves, and they all of jumped down.

John hit the ground a bit harder than the others and staggered around. He could taste blood in his mouth. He coughed, and blood sprayed against his visor. _"Could you sacrifice me to complete your mission? Could you watch me die?" _John remembered those words. He thought he heard Cortana. There was a defogging unit in his helmet that would clear away most of the stuff as he shook his head to clear as much as he could away, but even with that, it would take it a few minutes.

Sasuke grabbed him by his arm, and shook him. _"Sir, are you okay?" _He asked.

"_You're vitals just peeked KIA." _Konohamaru added as they came into a well lit area. John gave them a quick nod. He needed medical attention.

Thel ran up ahead of them, stopping when he came to a ledge where he could see the two Pelicans, a few Marines, and a bunch of Unggoy, Jiralhanae, and Kig-Yar. This would make things a lot more fun.

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Naruto sighed angrily as he walked through the corridors of _Shadow of Intent_, dressed in his old Covenant Armor of the SpecOps. He carried only his twin katanas, a plasma rifle, and four plasma grenades. Behind him was his team. Ahriel, Haer, and Rauk trailed behind him by one step while Zabuzza, Mikoto, and Yugito trailed behind them by a good two steps. They had just entered normal space and had been ordered to get into a Phantom to prepare for boarding action.

Naruto had mixed feelings about that though. Since they were no longer part of the Covenant military, he doubted he could disobey direct orders. But these orders weren't to protect him or the crew. His orders were to protect other ships, namely _Ravenous Twilight_. _Ravenous Twilight _had been fighting the Flood controlled ships since the beginning, and since the battle was letting up, Rtas believed that they might be getting weak minded, and believed that they had the enemy on the ropes. He doubted their Shipmaster would suspect a surprise attack, but then again, he knew the Shipmaster well.

Naruto for the most part was just worried about his team, and that he now outranked Haer. Haer had always been his commander on previous missions, and now that he was commander of the team he felt weak. He really didn't think he deserved it when he had made so many mistakes. But the only reason he had never been promoted to commander of a squad was because of the damn council. They had mixed feelings about letting him be one, even though his battle record was, even in their eyes, impressive. But they never went through with it.

So Rtas did it after making him take a test. The test was simple, or by his standards simple. The test was to beat all nine of his best Sangheili warriors. Naruto did this, but got beat up pretty badly. He was lucky that his healing ability still worked, or he'd be limping from his injuries or possible still in bed. And the only reason he got injured were his new changes to his body, which he wasn't used to. Even his armor had been changed. His armor, which had been upgraded to his new form, now gave his tail armor, and also allowed

it to move. Zabuza had comically made a point that it too could be used as a weapon, and to which it was, upside his head. His new legs were also given the same type of armor now that they resembled more closely to Sangheili legs anyway.

Aside from the changes, Naruto was ready for combat again. If at anything, he was ready all the time. Just give him a target, and he'd knock it down until stayed down.

Oh and there were the other two things. Naruto was getting Yugito as a teammate. That wasn't so much a problem as it turned out to be. They acknowledged her abilities after she went two-tails, claiming she was another God. Naruto of course, rolled his eyes, walked up, and punched the Sangheili, stating that Gods don't exist. The other problem was Rtas. Rtas had openly tried to get them to sleep together by making damn sure that every room on the ship was taken by sleeping Sangheili, Unggoy, and Huragok. This worked of course, since Naruto got his own room, and Yugito was forced to sleep in his room with him. Naruto slept on the floor while she slept on the bed.

Now Naruto's back was slightly sore, he was a bit tired, and he was overall annoyed with Rtas. One thing was for certain, hell better break loose on the ship, or someone or something was going to get its ass kicked.

"Mount up." Naruto ordered as they walked into the hanger. A team of SpecOps Sangheili stood by another Phantom, their dark armor standing out against the dark purple armor of the Phantom. Naruto gave them a quick nod, to which they replied with one of their own. Naruto boarded their Phantom last after everyone was in. He made sure they were in the gravity mounted holds before getting in one as well.

The pilot, a young Sangheili named Root, looked over his shoulder to stare at the Demon. Yugito was unaware of his hateful glare. Naruto caught it, and sent it back with one of his own. Root turned around, focusing back on his task. He didn't want to die by his hands. He'd sooner bleed on the ground then die by his hands.

"_Uzumaki, there's a change of plans." _Rtas's voice came over his COM. Naruto sighed. He hated changes. Changes meant problems. "_A strike team was sent into High Charity to retrieve something that gave them a message. The message was short, but this is what we got." _

"_My brothers, we are pinned downâ€|" _Static hissed over the COM for moment before the sound of explosions went off. A moment later, the voice came down. "_We intercepted a message from something. We were sent in toâ€|" _More static sounded of the COM. Naruto grew worried. Were there more Sangheili on High Charity still? _"-storage container must get off High Charity." _More static, followed by close explosions. There was a moment of silence before the grunted pain of the speaker came back. "_Stopâ€| the ship. The deviceâ€|" _The COM went white with noise followed by Rtas's voice.

"_You're mission is to get aboard the ship, _Breaking Dawn_, and retrieve whatever device is on it that was referred to. The ship is currently still docked in the lower levels of High Charity. Find whatever it is, take it, and blow the ship, along with High Charity."

—

"Understood." Naruto shook his head. He hated retrieval missions just as much as he hated talking about their faith. He looked over his team, sighing as he did. _They're not ready for this. I should have given them a proper test before allowing them to join. _Naruto shook his head. Thinking badly about his team would lead to bad results, mission failure, or worse, death. He had to remain focused, determined, proud, and think sideways, not forward.

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Sasuke grabbed the Kig-Yar by the back of its neck tightly and twisted it. It broke with a silent crack, and he dropped the body off the tree branch it had been hiding on. For the past ten minutes they had been creeping through the jungle to track down Johnson after his Pelican was shot down along with the other transport. After securing the old water planet for recycling Earths salt water, they walked right back into the forest, Haku scouting for targets, to get away from the banshees that were certain to return. That was where the fun began.

Jackals with beam rifles were perched in various spots, sniping anything that moved. John ordered them to move in through the shadows while Haku shot them out of the trees and cliffs with his sniper rifle. John was the rabbit for the little game. Thel, Sasuke, and Konohamaru were lookouts and neck breakers for any they could sneak up on. Haku had downed most of them, but some were in tricky spots that he couldn't see or get to. So for those it was a fun game of Trick Shooting. Haku impressed John when he managed an off the wall, through the bush, around the stone, and into the head of a Jackal that had been taking aim at Konohamaru. John was impressed, Haku not so much. Haku had been flanked by a Jackal, stepped on, and then kicked which threw his shot off, even though he still hit his target. The Jackal that attacked him was dead on the ground beside him, its neck twisted all the way around its body.

After that shot, things calmed down enough for them to all regroup, and slowly make their way up the trail to where gunfire was sounding. John was jogging beside the other Spartans, his mind blanking out every now and then. He was tired. Sasuke was beside them whole way, holding a battle rifle in one hand, and a grenade in the other. John gave him a green light to throw it when he saw the fight going on.

Grunts were running around, screaming in their own language as they shot at anything that moved, even their allies. The grenade that Sasuke threw landed down in the middle of a group as John, Konohamaru, Sasuke, and Thel ran out into them. Haku took up a sniping position on the cliff behind them, sighting Jackals with beam rifles until all of them were gone.

Plasma fire forced John to take cover while the others opened fire. John could feel the tingle of electricity running down his spine after his shields collapsed from the plasma bombardment. He took a few calming breaths, waited for them to recharge, and then spun around his cover, searching for a target. He found a single Brute that was being stabbed by Thel with his energy sword. Once the Brute was confirmed dead, he pulled it out, and switched it off.

John grunted his thanks as he walked by the team, surveying the damaged remains of the downed Pelican. It was totally wrecked. Crates

of weapons and ammunition littered the ground around it, on it, and under it. Haku walked up to the sniper ammo that was sitting beside an oddly bent sniper rifle, and put the extra rounds on his belt. Konohamaru grabbed a few extra grenades while Sasuke grabbed some assault rifle ammo, shredder rounds to precious.

Thel took point, John following closely behind him with the other Spartans camouflaged again.

A bolt of plasma washed over John's shields, and he dove for cover while returning fire. A squad of Grunts was on the other side, guarding a small cave again. John took aim, fired, reloaded his weapon, and looked for more targets. He didn't find any.

They moved quickly across the bridge, into the cave entrance, and through a dark jungle that's canopy was so thick you couldn't see a ray of light. As they came to a ledge, a bark, roar, and growl sounded from the left. John looked left and found the Brute Chieftain that had captured Johnson shoving him into a rundown building. Johnson was kicked towards the place, to which he spun around to punch it in the chest. The Brute just stood there, possibly blinking before belly smacking him into the place. Two more walked in, possibly to make sure he was detained.

"See how they beat their trap?" Thel asked. John just nodded. He knew the Brutes were monsters. He doubted they even liked taking prisoners unless they were going to eat them. "I will help you spring them." John didn't need help. He could do it on his own. He also had the other Spartans with him. If he couldn't do it alone, they'd be able to help him.

John made quick hand motions to the team, and they spread out. Haku sat down flat on his stomach by a tree and boulder, hiding perfectly in the shadow of the two. He brought out his SRS 99D AM Sniper Rifle ammo, sighted through the scope, and gave a green light to him. Sasuke moved down the path to the right with Konohamaru. John wanted to use the high ground to his advantage for as long as he could. Thel and John remained where they were, waiting for a chance to fire. When Sasuke and Konohamaru gave him the green light, he did it as well.

They all opened fire on designated targets. Haku took out snipers on the far side of the complex, making sure they'd be safe until someone figured it out. Konohamaru lobbed a grenade down into a trio of Grunts, lighting their methane tanks on fire, and spewing hot gases onto others that quickly caught fire, and set their tanks on fire. Sasuke mowed down anything that came running at their location, his assault rifle spitting rounds into unprotected targets. John and Thel worked together to take down multiple targets, mostly Brutes that were running towards them. Haku began firing on the army on the dam that was trying to hide behind boxes, small transports, and the ledge. It didn't work.

Plasma grenades flew up to their hiding spots, forcing John and Thel to take cover as flashes of heat and light flashed where they had been. More plasma grenades filled the air; some were shot out of the sky, turning them back on their throwers while others detonated in the air. Haku concentrated his fire on the throwers next, paying no mind to the Jackals that were trying to get a fix on him. Sasuke and Konohamaru were able to take them out as they tried to target them.

John and Thel opened fire on a led Brute that was trying to order its group around. Sniper fire caught it in the jaw just it barked again.

John gave them a red light, and they all stopped. They had killed everything within eye sight, and nothing other than swinging lamps and window fragments moved in the distance. There were still blind spots that couldn't be seen. John didn't like it.

He gave quick, crisp, sharp hand signals to his team, and they moved out. Haku had been ordered to remain in cover, providing sniper fire, in case they needed it. The others moved out.

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The jumped from the Phantom and stepped onto the sticky surface of High Charity's new floor. The place was swamped with organic life of the Flood. It had taken over, making the place look like the inside of an organ. The floor was sticky with a clear slim that gave off a fowl stench. Sacks that had flower designs at their crowns moved, bulged, and became still as they walked past them. Bodies of every kind of Covenant race littered the floor near these sacks.

Naruto couldn't help but feel sorry for them. Nothing was worse than becoming a slave to the parasite. Not even death without honor would suffice or be close.

He closed his eyes, offering up a silent prayer for the corpses of his Sangheili brethren before lightning them on fire with a few flame grenades. Yugito and the others trailed behind him, all of them looking for a target. Naruto wasn't concerned with any enemy right now. He was worried about their mission. The team that had been sent in was professionals. They were Sangheili that had more battle experience dealing with the Flood than even him. But if they didn't make it, then what chance did they have?

"Uzumaki, the ship is this way." Ahriel announced, watching the flames die out over the burned remains of his brethren. Naruto nodded silently, and began walking through the now organic city hallways that had once been his home. The door in front of them was covered with the organic stuff of the Flood, and slowly crawling over it. The door opened, but slowly. When it was fully opened, Naruto and his team walked through

They passed through a section of open field, finding nothing but corpses of Infected Humans, Jiralhanae, Unggoy, and Kig-Yar. They were mangled, burned, full of holes, and some torn in half. Naruto walked past them, not once thinking about them. He had to move forward to the ship. Yugito looked down sadly at some of the humans that had been infected. She didn't know any of them, but she knew that a few were Marines by the dark olive they wore.

There was a low growl, and they quickly brought their weapons to bear. Naruto raised his plasma rifle, and made sure that the others did the same. They saw nothing. Naruto knew something was here. He could feel it.

The ground rumbled, shifted, and cracked. Infected Unggoy came out of the cracks. Their masks were gone, along with one arm which was now a long tentacle that was far longer their bodies. They glowed, an eerie

green, and breathed out a green mist as they chattered and ran at them. The team opened fire on them. White hot plasma melted their bodies, destroying their methane tanks in a flash of brilliant white-blue flames. When they were dead, Naruto ordered them to ceasefire.

If Unggoy were guarding the ships, even if it was Flood Infected Unggoy, they still didn't have much of a chance. Even Unggoy were strong so long as they had superior numbers or a strong leader. If not, they ran in terror. Naruto was certain that even the Flood weren't this stupid however. They had them here to test them, not to stop them. Whatever was on the ship was worth it, and was in need of capturing.

He motioned for the team to press forward, and they did without question.

A ten minute run through the ship had them soon in the hanger where the ship was located. It was still intact, and no Flood could be seen on it. Inside it may have been a different story though. Naruto motioned for them to take the Gravlift and head down to it. A low roar, almost like a moan sounded from the shadows. Naruto cursed.

The shadows came alive, and two hunkering beasts came out. With holes in their chests and stomachs, one thick arm placed over their mouths, and standing as tall if not taller than a Lekgolo, Naruto could only assume this was a new type of Flood that they had never seen before. Usually any time they had seen them, it was at the beginning stages of their development, usually within twenty four hours. They had let them run amuck for almost three or four days now. This was surely an advanced form.

Naruto holstered his rifle while the others opened fire on it. Its skin burned from the heat of their weapons, but otherwise remained unharmed. Naruto cursed. It had to have iron or something in its skin, making it more than just immune to their weapons. He grabbed his massive sword from his back, thankful that he had managed to persuade Zabuzza of it in exchange for one of his katanas, lit it, and charged the second one. It swung one arm at him. Naruto ducked under it, and drove his weapon through the hole in its chest and kicked the heated blade up through the top of the hole. It cut cleanly through its body, tearing the head apart. The massive beast fell over dead.

The other one roared at him, uncovering its face from view. Three furry antennae-looking probes hung from its mouth like whiskers. It had no visible eyes, and was clearly mad at him. Plasma struck it from behind, but it paid them no mind. A plasma sword tip appeared out of its mouth, and stood for only a moment before falling over dead. When this happened, the place became rather quiet. It was like all sound had been swallowed up by the shadows of the hanger.

"I've never seen one like that before," Ahriel said. "Could this be a new form if left unchecked?"

"It is a possibility." Haer answered.

"We must hurry," Naruto ordered as he walked towards the lift. "We must take the ship's device, blow it, and destroy High Charity as

well. We can't let the Flood get out of this sector." Naruto was pushed away, and a sharp pain entered his body. He could taste blood in his mouth. He collapsed to the ground, staring up at a masked figure in hanging upside down on the ceiling.

"_Greetings, Kyuubi. How are you?" _It spoke with the combination of a human voice and that of the Gravemind. The tentacle arm that held it to the ceiling let go and it lowered the energy sword to finish him off. A speeding blur appeared in front of him, blocking the blow while plasma fire erupted from behind.

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Johnson stared angrily at the team of Spartans as they snickered at him at the captured men. Reynolds was with them, and was shaking his head. "This isn't as fun as it looks. Cut the power." He barked. John tapped a few controls on the square device. It hissed, sparked, and then dropped to the ground with a hollow thud. Sasuke cut the men free while John helped Johnson up. The man gave him a big grin before stealing the radio that was on the ground in front of him. "Kilo-two-three, what's your ETA?"

"_Immanent, Sergeant. Find some cover. I've got a clear path."

—

"Rodger that, Hocus. Friendly gunship coming in hot."

John and the others nodded. Haku was still on sniper detail, and so the message had to be repeated. He gave them a red light, warning them to stop. _"Two Phantoms are inbound to this location. ETA is ten seconds. They're right on top of us, Master Chief." _He warned.

"Understood, Blue-two," John replied. He sighed. That wasn't good. But that did mean more targets, which meant less ground forces later on, which meant one less Covenant bastard to deal with. "Remain on sniper detail until the enemies are all dealt with, Blue-two. Blue-one, Blue-three, take the passage below, but don't come up until I give you the signal. Johnson and the Marines will run up the middle with me and Thel." Green lights winked on his display, and he sighed to himself as he checked his ammo.

When the first Phantom appeared, it hovered near Haku's location, releasing a squad of Grunts with two Brutes. Both ordered their squads up to the main path, unknowingly walking into their trap, and when they got up to the entrance, two loud bangs, followed closely by gunfire, consumed them. John had left two Lotus Anti-Tank mines above the entrance way with proximity set to high. Anything that got within two feet of them would be destroyed in a flash of light. That took care of one squad. Now they just had to worry about the second Phantom that was on the middle of the dam, releasing troops. Those that landed on the dam got an even nastier surprise. John gave the green light, and Haku opened fire with Sasuke and Konohamaru. The Marines reloaded their weapons, took aim, and then began firing on them with Thel and John. They were being hit from all side.

John flashed his red light, and the fire stopped.

"Hocus, Phantom," Johnson shouted.

"_I see it. Everyone down." _The Pelican spat out a barrage of missiles that collided with the first Phantom. It exploded into chunks of molten metal as the first salvo ended. _"Scratch one Phantom." _Hocus took aim on the second Phantom as it began backing up. That wouldn't save it. A barrage of missiles slammed into the front of its prow. It hissed with gasses and sparks, but otherwise remained floating, and still backing up. A second salvo of missiles slammed into it again, this time taking out both Anti-Gravity pods. It hummed once, fluttered, and then dropped into the ocean. _"That's two," _she reported with triumph in her voice. The Pelican roared overhead, stopping at the edge of the damn, just meters above the water.

The Marines loaded first, followed by Johnson, then the Spartan III's, followed by Thel, and then John. The hatch closed as they roared up into the sky, Johnson sporting a grin as he tapped the Chief on the shoulder. Master Chief gave him a quick nod before turning to face Thel. "I want answers, now." Thel nodded, and began explaining the situation.

(-)

Naruto jumped back, growling as he looked over his teammates. Yugito had been stabbed in the leg by the crazed Shinobi Flood, as Zabuza was calling it. It wasn't backing down, and it was most certainly not under full control of the Gravemind. It was trying to do something. Anything that got near it was either killed or wounded. That was how they all got hurt. Ahiel had been cut up badly by it, Haer had a broken arm, Yugito was stabbed, Mikoto was suffering from internal bleeding when it slammed her into a wall, Zabuza had broken his sword, Rauk had a concussion, and now Naruto had a stab wound with a large gash. Things weren't working to well for them.

The Flood Shinobi was sporting a shinobi uniform that had been made from rags, had dark brown hair that ended at the small of his back, a scar across his nose, and was missing an eye. In one hand, it held an energy sword that was much too big for it. In the other "hand" was a small device. A voice spoke. "There's no time to deal with them. Get me to the ship now!" It yelled. The infected shinobi nodded slowly, strained as it was, and ran off. Naruto hissed as he collapsed to one knee. He couldn't let it get away.

A dull roar sounded from behind. More of the hunkering beasts were slowly making their way to them. Naruto tossed a plasma grenade into the hole in its stomach, grabbed his team, helping them up, and ordered them to run. There was no point. High Charity was overrun. They should just take it out with the guns on their ships. Even with them they'd have a better chance.

"Rtas, we have a problem."

"_What is it?"_

"This place is too overrun. Suggest we bomb it from outside. The last ship you sent us to get has left now." Naruto replied as the ship, _Twilight Sword, _began to leave. "Something was put on the ship by a Flood infected human. Take out its engines, and I'll board it when the fighting is over. So long as it can't move we'll be okay."

"_Understood," _Rtas's voice vanished for a moment. _"I'm sending a Phantom to pick you up. Meet back where it dropped you off."

—

"Understood," Naruto replied as he led his team back the way they came. There was no point in fighting the enemy behind them. They'd just get overrun. The best thing was to get back to the ship. Besides, no one was fit to fight such a large infestation. Only an idiot would get through the place. (Yet Master Chief gets through it.) Ten minutes of running, and they were soon back where they started. The Phantom was already there, waiting for them. A strike team stood by, shooting at anything that moved. Naruto ushered his team in first, followed closely by the strike team. When they were in, he got in, and ordered the ship to leave.

The Phantom cried as more and more Flood appeared, some managing to cling to the hull of the ship. The pilot forced the ship higher into the air before backing it out into the void of space through the protective energy shield that kept the atmosphere in High Charity. The Flood moved once, froze, and then exploded. Naruto breathed a sigh of relief that he wasn't aware he'd been holding. His team was strapped in, some of them nodding off from blood loss. "Get to _Shadow of Intent_ right now. My teammates are injured." He ordered. Root nodded, pushed the Phantom as fast as it could go.

Twilight Sword poked its way out of High Charity, turned, and a Slipspace rupture appeared on its prow. Naruto cursed. Plasma torpedoes flew at it, some scoring hits just before it jumped. Naruto swore angrily. He failed two missions now. This would not bold well for him. _"Twilight Sword_ got away. But we know where it's heading. We will be following it. The Fleet of Flood ships now lies in ruins. High Charity will not be going anywhere either." _

Naruto closed his eyes. This still didn't bold well for him.

(Omake)

"Look up here, sir." John looked up, sighing as he did. The bones in his neck crunched, and he bit his bottom lip out of frustration. The Corporal was giving him a standard test to make sure nothing serious broke in the fall. Nothing too serious broke in the fall. Maybe a rib or two, a fracture in his left leg, maybe even a few cracks in his neck. Nothing too serious was broken. They also weren't even worth telling. But the man was giving him every kind of test that ranged from "How many fingers am I holding up." Like that.

"Two." John replied in a grunt. The Marine clicked a few buttons on his tablet, and shook his head.

"Look down here again, sir." John looked down, once again experiencing the crunchy sensation of his bones grinding against each other. There was a hiss in suit, and he sighed. He broke the seal for his Gel Layer. Not a great thing. "Turn around, sir. I need to see the damage." He ordered. John complied, slowly turned so that the man could look at his damaged armor. What was he going to do, attempt to fix it? The seal was in an odd place to begin with. "Please drop down to your knees, sir. I can't reach it." John lowered to his knees, and found that both his kneecaps were probably shattered as well when they crunched loudly. "Damn, sir. You're a mess."

_I fell two kilometers out of a burning ship, _he thought. He had spent too much time with Cortana. She was obviously rubbing off on him.

"Okay, sir. You can stand back up." John slowly stood back up, grunting as he did. The man began typing on his tablet again. "Okayâ€¦ we need to test your displays. We need to make sure they're in working order, sir. Just give me one moment and I shouldâ€¦" John couldn't hear him anymore. John blinked a few times. He could see his mouth moving, but no words were coming out. Was he deaf now or was his suit not working now? That would make things a bit more difficult if they got stuck fighting. The man began to stare at him.

"I can't hear you." The man's face fell from a look of boredom to straight 'Oh shit' in two seconds. John could once again see him talking, but not hear him.

"â€¦do it." Darkness filled his vision. John now couldn't see now. "Did that do it, sir?"

"Yeah, but now I can't see."

"Sir?"

"I said I can't see. The HUD has turned to black."

"Sir, can you hear me?"

_Great, he broke the speakers now, _John thought angrily. His suit, a billion dollar piece of equipment was in the hands of an idiot that obviously had no clue on what he was doing. If this guy didn't fix him soon, he was going to show him how to kill with a tissue.

"I think he hates you." A Marine spoke up.

"I think you need to shut up. I know what I'm doing. He's probably just happy that I fixed it."

_No you haven't, _John thought as he tapped him on the shoulder. He tapped his faceplate, and the man looked at him with confusion. John tapped it a few more times before the man began to panic.

"Okay, sir. Just give me a moment and I should have it fixed." John could see. The man looked up at him, his eyes blinking, and his lips pressed into a thin line. "Did that do it?"

"Yeah," John replied. He wanted to pat him on the shoulder, but instead he spun around. "No. You broke it."

"Oh shitâ€¦"

A/N

Okay, I'm never doing that again. I had to play the first mission nearly twenty times before I got most of it down. That sucked. I played it with my idea of fun skulls though, so, when I had it be gold guys instead of blue ones or what not, that was because I had Field Promotions for everyone on, along with Catch, Grunt Birthday Party, More Bang for your buck, and the best one yet, I would have

been your daddy, also known as IWHBYD. I also know that just plowing through a mission, which is what I did here basically, isn't very fun when you can just go do the same thing online or offline. Also, depending on how you do it on legendary, and what skull you have on, Johnson will say that line, along with a few others. That's my favorite one though, so I used it.

As always, thanks for the reviews, and if you wanna play, let me know, and I'll see what I can do. God knows I'm going to wanna have company for the next one since my friends that I played with are all idiots and wouldn't let me repeat the same chapter to get more info.

18. Chapter 18

Chapter 18

"Sorry for the tight squeeze," Private Lash said. "Tell the commander her Ace is in the hole." Lash ordered.

The Pelican roared down onto the landing pad, its tail engines fluttering to make adjustments as it came down for a smooth landing. The hatch was already opened, and Chief looked ready to jump out. Sasuke's team jumped out first, followed closely by Johnson and John. Thel got off last, looking around as he did. He was very well liked among the Marines. And several occasions he had seen them reach for their weapons on impulse. He couldn't blame them.

"Hey," Rush whispered out groggily, "Check it out."

"No way! A Spartan!" Tanner said in shock.

"For real?!" Lenard snapped, his bandaged eyes blinding just a bit more. "Man you better not beâ€¦"

"No man! He's here. We're going to be alright."

Miranda Keys came up to them, greeting them at the stairs with a big grin. They all snapped off crisp salutes, making her smile a bit more. "Where did you find him?" She half joked.

"Nappingâ€¦ out back." Johnson replied with an even bigger grin. She chuckled at his joke.

"I'll bet." She turned to face John, her smile growing just a bit more. "It's good to see you again, Chief." She raised her hand, and he took it and shook it.

"Likewise, Ma'am," he replied happily.

"Let's get you up to speed." She turned and began walking. Despite being rundown and full of old tech, it worked rather smoothly. Be it the few glitches in systems, but it worked smoothly enough. They passed wounded Marines, techs that were working on Warthogs, Scorpion Tanks, a few tankers, and a few trucks that were unloading weapons of every kind. If they were going to get hit, the Covenant would have a hell of a time trying to take the place, but then again, that's what they had all though on Chi Rho before it was glassed. But this would bit a bit different. They could take them because they had something

they didn't have back then, and that was a team of Spartans.

"The Prophet of Truth's ships breached the lunar perimeterâ€¦| smashed what was left of the home fleet. Terrestrial casualties from the subsequent bombardment wereâ€¦|" Two men ran between them with a medical bed and wounded marine lying inside it, "extreme. Truth could have landed anywhere, but he committed all his forces here: East Africa, the ruins of New Mombassa. Then they started digging."

They walked through a few more hallways, all of them lined with wounded marines still waiting for medical attention or standing guard. "What about Halo?" John asked. He needed to know if it was destroyed by Cortana's gusty plan or not. If it wasn't destroyed, that meant she either failed or she didn't do it. In which case, he still had a chance to save her.

Miranda moved a strand of her hair from her eyes as she spoke. "We stopped it. But only temporarily. Now the Prophet of Truth is looking for something called the Ark, where he'll be able to fire all the Halo rings. If he succeeds, Humanity, the Covenant; every sentient being in the galaxyâ€¦|"

"â€¦|the rings will kill us all." John finished as she let it soak in.

"Ma'am? I have Lord Hood."

"Patch him through." She ordered sharply. The man gave her a quick nod, casting only the slightest of glances at John as they all turned to the main monitor. The image flickered, fuzzed, and then solidified into Lord Hood. The old man was running a hand over his shaven head that had a few days of growth to it.

"_Good news, Commander Keys?" _He asked as he put his hat on.

"Good as it gets, sir." She replied carefully. Among friends she could be a bit more open, less lineate, but with him, she had to show respect, trust him, and show her belief in his leadership.

"_So I see," _he spoke happily. _"What's your status, son?"

—

"Green," he spoke clearly, "Sir." He added a second later.

"_Glad to hear it,"_ Lord Hood said, his eyes momentarily looking around the place. He couldn't see any technicians around to fix him up which he was certain he needed, but he'd trust in his judgment. When they had first gotten him back after his failed mission to capture a Prophet he had severe damage to his own body, but claimed he was okay. Record indicated that the only sleep he'd gotten between there and on his way back was while he had been unconscious. He'd trust in his judgment for now. _"Commander's come up with a good plan, but without youâ€¦| I wasn't sure if we could pull it off." _He informed him.

Miranda picked up a tablet, hitting a few buttons on it while showing it to John. It was a layout of the defense network stationed around a twenty-five kilometer circle in the middle of what looked like a desert. "Truth's ships are clustered above the excavation site. And his infantry have deployed Anti-Air craft batteries around the

perimeter. But, if we neutralize one of the batteries, punch a hole in Truth's defensesâ€¦"

"_I'll initiate a low-level stick. Hit him right where it hurts," _Hood finished. He folded his arms over his chest, a sly grin appearing on his thin pressed lips as he did. _"I only have a handful of ships, Master Chief. It's a big risk, but I'm confident youâ€¦"
_The lights went out, and red lights soon came on. Computers that had been running felt silent, along with fans, radio chatter, and the labored breathing from the dry heat. All was silent.

"Hell! Not again," someone muttered in the dark.

"Emergency generators! Now!" Miranda ordered sharply.

"Shielding failed. They're down and charging." Someone reported.

"As soon as they're up, reestablish contact with Lord Hood. Let him knowâ€¦"

"_You are, all of you, vermin." _All eyes fell on the main view screen as the Prophet of Truth appeared before him, translators working to translate what he said. _"Cowering in the dirt, thinking what, I wonder? That you might escape the coming fire? No. Your world will burn until its surface is but glass. And not even your Demon will live to creep, blackened, from its hole, to mar the reflection of our passage. The culmination of our journey. For your destruction is the will of the Gods. And I? I am the instrument." _The lights came back on, and the hum computers, fans, and radios sounded again. Everyone looked at each other, Sasuke looking to the newly arrived Team Silver and their soot covered armor.

"Cocky bastard. Just loves to run his mouth." Johnson told them, his lit cigar bouncing up and down as he spoke.

"Does he usually mention me?" John inquired as he looked over at Commander Keys. She caught his look through his faceplate, hidden though it was, but she caught it nonetheless.

She looked distressed for a moment, but she quickly beat it down. She had to run the place. She had to show she was still in charge and knew what she was doing. "Give the order we're closing shop." She commanded to her communications expert.

"Ma'am?" He questioned.

"We're about to get hit," Miranda said, glancing back at the chief. The man began giving out commands as she spoke to the others. "The wounded. We're getting all of them out."

"If I have to carry 'em myself." Johnson told her, determination in his eyes.

"Ma'am? Squad leaders are requesting a rally pointâ€¦ Where should they go?" communications spoke up, watching as she walked up the stairs.

Miranda pulled her pistol out. She pulled it back, loading a single round into the chamber. "To war."

(-)

Naruto stared at his team as they were mended by doctor Sangheili and Huragok. The Unggoy that walked about carried medicine and other equipment under the eyes of SpecOps Sangheili warriors. Naruto was taking no chances with his team under the knife. Even if the doctor Sangheili weren't warriors, that didn't mean that they couldn't kill you. Xedrael had thwarted two attempts on Naruto's life in the past after he'd been wounded during training. This was different however. His team was under the knife. They wouldn't dare hurt his people, but the Demon, even though she was from his world, was a different question.

Naruto had no doubt that something would be attempted on her life. So that was why he was on standby, watching over her, and waiting for someone to try something.

The doctor working on her slowly moved his thin plasma scalpel over her wounds, making them cleaner for stitching and healing later on. He kept looking between Naruto and the wound. Naruto was certain he would try something. The doctor had been unusually slow with her. The other had been patched up in mere minutes, and they had greater wounds than she did. So Naruto watched him, carefully maneuvering the weapon that could end her life in a split second.

He faltered with the weapon, slipping it deeper into her body for a fraction of a second. His arm dropped to the ground, the scalpel held above her, and his body fell backwards. She was bleeding badly now. The Sangheili's head rolled across the floor, blood gushing out of his neck freely. Naruto glared at his corpse as he pointed to another doctor with his sword. The doctor rushed forward, ready to aid him. Naruto handed him the tool, and stepped back.

Rtas would hear of this no doubt. Naruto's actions weren't that of a normal leader. But then again, Rtas was anything but a normal leader. He would order his Unggoy to get behind his Sangheili warriors if things got too dangerous for them. He showed respect and care for lesser being like them. Naruto was certain that if anyone understood his action, it would be him.

The doctor slowly worked on stopping the bleeding, and then began to heal the wound made by the previous Sangheili. Two Unggoy came to retrieve the corpse. When they asked what he wanted to be done with it, Naruto ordered that it be taken to Rtas, an explanation would follow shortly. The blood was cleaned up as well, and before long, both Yugito and the blood on the ground were cleaned up.

When Yugito was sitting up, glancing at the small scar that now ran across her body, she could only sigh at it.

"I must leave to make my report with Rtas. If you need anything," he tossed her a small radio, "just let me know, and I'll come." She snatched it out of the air, checking the device over while he left. When he was outside, he glanced at the two guards at the door. The door slid shut, and he closed his eyes. "If I find even one scratch on her when I return, I will pull your heads from your shoulders, and destroy your lineage. Is that understood?" They nodded without blinking. They would protect her.

(-)

Rtas sat in his chair in his quarters. They were tracking the ship at the moment, trailing by only a few minutes, and were slowly catching up to it. The ship was heading for Earth, but was damaged severally due to the extreme barrage of plasma torpedoes it had taken before jumping. There were only a few reasons on why it would head to Earth, but they were all thinking the same thing: To consume all of the lives on the planet. Earth, regardless of the damage to its numbers, still possible held over a billion people on the planet. That was more than enough for an army to take over anything.

But that wasn't his biggest worry at the moment. No. His biggest worry was the condition of Naruto's team, and more preciously, the female Demon. With her injured, she might not be able to produce a child, making her useless as a potential mate for Naruto. If that was the case, then his plan to get them together would be all for not. No. He could make it work. After all, their technology could heal almost all wounds, and add to the fact that she was Jinchuuriki as well; it made sense that she would heal all wounds, including reproduction organs. She would still work for him. The only problem was getting them to sleep together and having him claim her as a mate.

He thought long and hard about it. He could try many approaches, all of which would be seen through by Naruto. If he had to hate him for anything, it was that Naruto could see through most of his plans that revolved around him. Naruto didn't mind being used for dangerous missions, be them stupid or not, but when he was used to get together with someone, like when he had used him to make friends with a former Sangheili warrior that eventually turned traitor. But something like this would be hard. He'd have to think sideways in order to get them together.

A beep sounded on his chair, and he clicked the flashing button on the panel at his desk. "What is it?" He asked slowly.

"_Fleet Master, you said to inform you of anything Uzumaki does concerning the female Demon. I thought it wise to inform you that he has promised to destroy the lineage of the two guards who fail to protect her if she gets a scratch on her." _

Rtas had a small grin appear on his mandibles at this. He could use this. Naruto was leaving himself open for an attack. But he wouldn't do this blindly. Naruto was prone to setting traps for anyone, friend or foe. For Rtas this would seem like a dream come true, but he could see the traps already in play. "Understood," Rtas hit another button, and the speaker crackled before going silent. _You're setting me up, aren't you? _Rtas scratched at his lower mandibles. _I guess I'll just spring them and see what happens. _The door slid open, and Naruto walked in. _And you're being bold. _

"Fleet Master, I thought it wise to inform of the mission I went on." Naruto entered with a hidden grin. He'd already won, and Rtas wasn't aware of it just yet. Rtas turned his chair to face him. He resisted the urge to rest his head on his knuckles as he watched Naruto stand before him, blood still dropping from the bottom of sheath of his katana. Rtas had a hidden grin as well. With the blood stained weapon, Naruto had already insured his victory.

"Speak then, and I shall listen." Naruto took a deep breath, and

began to explain things.

(-)

Master Chief, Neji, Hanabi, and Tenten, all gathered up what weapons they needed. This wasn't an evac mission for them. This was a kick-their-ass-until-they-leave mission where running and gunning worked best. (This is a mission that works best with running and gunning for me anyways.) And since Sasuke's team, though qualified for this, was being forced into scouting out a potential escape zone and fallback point, they were out of the picture, leaving him with Team Silver. He had no doubts about their abilities. He had never worked with them, and so, was a little worried about how they'd get along. For the most part, they seemed to be okay. Neji was Blue-one for the time being while Hanabi was Blue-two, and Tenten Blue-three. They had no problems with being numbers and colors, which was a good thing. And they knew what weapons they wanted.

Neji took a pair of SMGs, loading up on extra ammo while Hanabi took an assault rifle with both types of ammo, both shredder and armor piercing, and Tenten taking up the battle rifle. All three loaded up with grenades of every kind, along with a pair of pistols, a med kit in case they needed it and some satchels of high explosives just in case they needed a quick exit through a wall. John stuck with an assault rifle and a battle rifle, loading up on both types of ammo for both, as many grenades as he could hold, and a pair of pistols in case things got really hairy.

As his team finished getting loaded up, the ground shook, and they all looked around. _"Point of entry, best assessment!" _Reynolds shouted over the radio.

"_The hanger, Sergeant." _

"_Agreed. Master Chief, get there." _

The team looked at each, all of them turning their safeties off before following the Chief as he walked up to the first door. He waited for it to open. It didn't move, and a Marine chuckled. "This place is full of old tech, like these door controls," he told them as he pressed a bright red button on the wall. There was a hiss, a snap, and a loud squeaking sound as the door finally opened. John felt a ping of stupidity at this, but pushed it aside as he walked inside the next room, which actually looked more like a cave with metal walkways, concrete structures built around stalagmites and stalactites. He could hear people chattering off commands of every kind, some ordering their men to reinforce certain areas that had either not been fixed from previous engagements with the Covenant, or just hadn't been put up yet.

John ran through the cave, following Neji since he knew where to go. The others trailed behind, their guns lowered so they didn't have to worry about them going off by accident and killing someone. The ran through the concrete building, up to another door, around a corner, and straight into a small tunnel network that lead to a main passage that was getting hit hard by Covenant forces. A warthog with its gunner pressing hard on the turrets' triggers was taking aim at an army of Grunts that came rushing them. One threw a plasma grenade at the front it. It stuck, brightened, and exploded in a flash of light and thunder. The warthog vanished. Nothing but a smoky half of the

vehicle remained, its driver and gunner both dead from the intense heat.

John gave a green light to his team. No point in staying hidden, he thought, whipping around the corner to take aim at the army of Grunts that were opening up on them. John and Tenten opened up on their heads with the battle rifles, turning them into nothing but mush as they made every bullet strike dead center between their eyes. Hanabi and Neji unloaded on those closer with full auto fire into their faces, chests, and legs, either crippling them or killing them.

Jackals ran around a stack of crates, came to a skidding stop, crossed their shields, and began firing at them. John lobed a grenade over them, letting it land just a foot behind them after it bounced off the crates behind them. It detonated in a flash of smoke and thunder. Their bodies were thrown forward, stuck full of holes, splashing the ground with bright pink blood that splashed on the ground. They moved forward, shooting anything that moved until a dark blue armored paw reached out, and punched John in the head. It didn't hurt him, but it did surprise him.

Standing behind the metal crates was a blue armored Brute wielding a brute launcher. It raised it to face John's faceplate, grinned, and then toppled backwards when three small puffs sounded from the side of its face near the eye hole. It collapsed backwards, bleeding flowing from the tiny wounds around its face. John looked over to see Tenten kneeling beside him, offering him a helping hand to stand up. He took it, grateful for her quick thinking. He didn't understand why his motion tracker didn't show him there. He'd have to look at it later.

(-)

Mikoto sat in Zabuza's lap, grinning as he playfully swatted his nose with the end of her finger. If there was one thing she liked about _Shadow of Intent_, it was that the lights could be adjusted to their liking, setting a mood for almost anything. She had never seen such a wonderful thing in her life. When she told this to Naruto, he almost gawked at her before remembering the world she had come to live on, and their tech level. But for her and Zabuza, this was the most precious, if not neatest things, they had ever seen.

Zabuza leaned down onto the bed, pulling her down beside him as he did. She rolled over so that her face was inches away from his. "Naruto, what do you know about him?" Mikoto froze for a moment. She hadn't expected him to be interested in him. She frowned for a moment before smiling at him.

"He's the Kyuubi Jinchuuriki, a former child of Konoha back before the attack started," she answered simply. Zabuza didn't blink or look surprised. If at anything, that would explain why Naruto held her with no real respect like he did him. Zabuza hadn't been from Konoha, so Naruto would ultimately have no reason for hating him, which made sense to him. Mikoto took in a long breath before continuing. "My former husband, Fugaku, argued that the boy needed to be put down when the Kyuubi first attacked, claiming that it would take him over. I agreed with him at the time, but now I think I was mistaken. Without him, I doubt we'd have a fighting chance against those monsters, or have made so many friends."

Zabuza rolled his eyes. "I don't think they need him. If at anything, I think they just need a strong will and leader to pull through this. But it is interesting that they let him join them first when they were killing off the rest of humanity while he got in scot-free."

"It was probably because of his Jinchuuriki powers that let him join. They had probably never seen anything like him, and thus, decided to let him join." She nestled against the crook of his neck. "Let's not talk about this anymore. It makes me feel dirty." She remembered the coup that Fugaku had planned. He had spent years planning his coup, but towards the final part of it the Brutes came and attacked Konoha. He tried to bring it back by taking over as leader of their hiding spot, but was ultimately killed by Danzo, who quickly took over as leader of the group. She had spoken out against such plans originally, but after some time, she began to accept it. Thinking back on all the things she had done, all the things that Fugaku told her he'd do, she really didn't want to speak bad about Naruto, not after everything he had done for her.

Zabuza nodded quietly, accepting her unspoken reason.

(-)

Rtas blinked twice as Naruto moved his pawn to take his knight. Rtas had no love for this game; it was a human game, not a Sangheili game. True they had some similarities to the old game on Sanghelios called Tototo, but it had fewer pieces, less moves, and more rules. But Naruto loved this game for all its worth. Depending upon how they played the game, one of them could learn something of grand interest. In this case: Naruto's feelings for the young female warrior, and Rtas's intentions on how to get them together.

The opening had started off as it always had. Both moved slowly, not giving out any strikes or talking as they moved each piece into position. Rtas was excellent at games like this. Naruto believed that Rtas could see the future when he played the Tototo. But this game had two advantages for Naruto. The first was that although brilliant, Rtas had a hard time understanding how some pieces moved, since in Tototo, only certain pieces moved certain ways while others could move anyway they wanted to, and he had been used to playing it since his birth. He'd only been playing this game for about six months now. The other advantage was that Rtas, when seized with an opportunity to win, would take it if the piece being sacrificed was great in his eyes. For him, sacrificing a Queen to take a Pawn that would leave Naruto's King open for Check, was well worth the risk.

He moved the dark piece into motion, and had it take the Pawn, putting Naruto in Check. Now came the fun part. One of them would start a conversation now. Naruto took in a deep breath, looking for his opening attack. "The Flood infected human was a man that once went by the name of Iruka." Naruto stated calmly. Rtas's left eye twitched as Naruto moved his King up one spot, putting it out of danger, and straight up for his Queen to take his own while being backed by a Rook. Not a good combination.

"Really now," Rtas moved his Queen back two spots, setting it beside his own Rook. "Did you know him?" Naruto shook his head. "A pity then, I suppose. One less human to worry about, in the end, I

suppose. What I'm curious about is much more important." Naruto took his Queen with a Bishop, grinning as he did. "You said that there was a voice that spoke from the speakers on High Charity, a female voice, correct?"

Rtas moved his Rook to take the Bishop. "Yes." Naruto took his Rook with his King. His King was once again in danger and unprotected. "The Demon called "Master Chief" referred to her as Cortana while I worked with him. This could be the same person."

"So you believe Iruka was under its command, rather than the Gravemind?" Rtas took moved his last Pawn to take Naruto's last Pawn. With the board now clear of Pawns, set up with only Rooks, Bishops, Knights, and the two Kings, things were now down to their talking strategy, getting around their defenses to see the others plan of attack on their strategy. "Why would it go to Earth though? And the device it took, what do you think it does?"

Naruto leaned back in his chair, a faint grin touching his lips. "I have no idea." He stared at the board. "Did you know that the female still holds her demon, Nibi, the two-tailed cat?"

"No. No I did not." Rtas took his last Bishop with his last Rook. Naruto returned by taking his last Rook with his last Rook. "Can she heal her wounds like you can? After all, it was her that took the blow to save your life, was it not?" Naruto cringed slightly. His opening move was stating moves. Classic approach.

"Yes. She saved my life by taking the blow for me. Interesting that she would, after I killed the one-tailed Jinchuuriki, Gaara, but I suppose that just proves that the mind of a female cannot be fully understood. She isn't mad with me about it anymore, and she seems to accept it as though it was meant to be." Naruto leaned forward onto his elbows as he looked the playing field over again. In truth, he had never won this game against Rtas. It wasn't about winning actually. It was just about seeing what plans they had for each other.

"Being saved by a female is worse than dying at the hands of a weaker being. You know this, don't you? And you know the only way to make it right and regain your honor?" Rtas moved his King into place, sitting it beside his King. Naruto blinked. "She must die." Naruto reached to take his own King, ready to move in for the kill, but stopped. Rtas wasn't testing him mentally, he was testing his honor. Naruto didn't believe in honor. That much had been made abundantly clear in his years fighting their ideas of honor. Instead, Naruto moved it back, showing his submissive state of mind. "Do you even have the will to kill her for saving you?" Rtas moved his King up to chase after Naruto's King.

Naruto prepared to move his back before he felt something odd about the Rtas was speaking. He wasn't seriously planning on having Naruto kill his own teammate was he? Rtas could be pretty crazy at times, but he wasn't that crazy. No. If he knew Rtas like he knew him, then he'd be having someone else take her out for him. That only left one option for him. Naruto moved the piece forward, putting both of their Kings into Check. Rtas would win if he took it, but Naruto wasn't planning on losing. "You can kill her. I have no love for her."

"Very well then," he pressed a button on his chair, and brought up the image of Yugito, sleeping soundly in her bed with two Sangheili in black armor standing over her with their blades drawn. Naruto gave the screen a blank stare. "You may kill her now," he told them happily.

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Why was he surprised by his current situation? He asked himself this several times as he made a mad run towards the hanger with Neji closely behind him. Both of them were running as fast as they could, keeping neck and neck at times unless they had to run and gun, in which case, John was able to pull ahead just by a few inches. But as for running at full speed without anything to shoot, they were neck and neck. But still, how had they gotten stuck into doing this? John knew that Neji would help him no matter what. And he was thankful for it, but he could have done this crazy little mission on his own. He'd admit that it was nice to know how far the other Spartans would go to protect one of their own and the lives of others, but this was just nuts.

They were running towards the hanger, a bomb timer scrolling across the far corner of their HUDs, counting down while giving them an update on how close it was to detonation every time a minute ticked off. This was just the sort of thing Spartans were designed for though, so maybe it evened out somehow. But regardless, this was just nuts. Neji had been walking a clear line of insubordination when he stated that he wouldn't leave him behind. John was thankful his team was easier to reason with, but Neji had made it clear that he wouldn't leave until John was out as well, which was a good thing in the end.

During the whole time he'd been running around the base, defending and setting off the bomb, he'd been hearing voices in his head. The impact from falling two kilometers must have really knocked him senseless if he was hearing voices. He didn't view it as a problem though. He just viewed it as another obstacle he'd have to work around. He'd worked around worse, and this would be no different. The only problem was that each time it happened, the longer the voice lasted, the longer he remained unable to focus, and the longer he seemed to experience a deep pain through his entire body. He'd have been dead had Neji not decided to tag along and help him. But he'd never voice his thanks verbally or remark on what was happening to him.

They ran back into the long corridor where they had run into the Jackals, passing over their corpses of Marines, Jackals, a few Grunts, and two Brutes. John didn't take the time to look around. Neji did, but didn't see anything as they ran past one of the support columns and fan units that had been built into the ground to keep the heat of the shields as low as it could. It was blown apart, melted at the base, and was on the verge of coming down at the place shook.

They ran into the entrance to the place, and John froze again. His head hurt again, and he could taste blood and copper in his mouth again. His breathing became shallow, and he was certain his pulse to near KIA levels. He placed a hand on the frame, shaking his head. Neji came to a stop in front of, turning to see if he was alright. _**"You have been called upon to serve." **_The voice was back, but

it didn't last long this time. It faded away, and John felt his body stiffen, grow warm, and his pain subsided. He could no longer taste the copper, but the blood in his mouth remained behind. He swallowed it down. Spitting would do him no good.

"Are youâ€|"

"I'm fine."

"_Chief, Neji, find that elevator," _Johnson ordered over their radios. They didn't bother giving a reply as they ran through another set of doors, past some stairs, through some Grunts and Jackals that ran around in fear, unsure of what to do. Some fired at them, but they're shots were wild, and most just targeted their allies by mistake and fear. Jackals tried to keep order, barking and hissing out commands, but it would do them no good. They weren't like the Brutes that wielded supreme power and awesome strength.

Neji and John ran past them, snapping necks and breaking bodies as they found the elevator. They ran inside, hit the control button just as the countdown timer morphed into "0:00" on their HUDs. Fire and thunder ripped through the complex, and John felt like he was going to throw up again as the pain, bad taste, and voice came back to him. _**"This place will become your home." **_The elevator dropped down fast enough for them to feel zero gee for a split second. The metal door above them heated to a cherry red, shimmered, and then exploded into flames as fire smacked up against the back of concrete shaft. It swelled, grew, and then raced down on them. John and Neji didn't scream or anything as their skin burned from the intense heat of the blast. _**"This place will become your tomb."**_ Darkness took both of them, as the elevator buckled, shook, and then fell the rest of the way down.

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The methane suite was the last place to find them. For _Shadow of Intent_, the creators had wisely put in a place for anyone that breathed oxygen to watch over the Unggoy, which was why it was also the last place anyone would ever think to look for them. For Naruto, this was his home away from home away from home, home. Since he was always away, this place was like a third kind of home for him, which was why he often called it his "Home away from home away from home, home" just for kicks.

The creators had made it so that it was designed for the comforts of those that had to watch the little bastards. This was where they often spoke out against their lords, spoke of heresy, and on occasion, reproduced with the female Unggoy. It was designed with a couch or something close to it, a table, radio set, and a holographic board game, for Naruto that was Chess. But the more interesting thing about the place was that it was devoid of cameras and speakers, which made it hard to keep track of.

Naruto knew that a few high ranking Unggoy knew of this place, and had reproduced her. They even made sure that it had no cameras to watch them. The only way to get a hold of anyone was with a signal unit, which worked quiet well, so long as someone was listening, which they often were. But if you didn't have one on you, or just weren't listening to it, it was an ideal place to stage fun things. In this case, have a secret relationship with Yugito.

They were cuddled up on the couch, both naked, and both resting in each other's arms. They were covered in sweat, and despite the humid air, were happy. Naruto had pulled off a big prank, saved her life, and gave her the one dream she always wanted. "Thank you," she whispered happily as she nestled closer to his body. The thin blanket that covered them clung to her body, making it a bit of an annoyance when she turned to face him fully. Her face was flushed, whether from embarrassment or the heat, he didn't know, or care for that matter. He was happy to make a promise like that.

Naruto leaned forward, pressing his lips on her as he rolled her on top of his body. When she was out of her armor she wasn't that very tall. She was probably only a good half a foot taller than him. That didn't make any difference to him though; he just didn't care about her height, body weight, how beautiful she looked, or her power. All he cared about was her ability to make kids, that she'd love him until the end of time, and that they'd be together with his first mate, Hinata. Thanks to her, he'd come to accept that things were just not worth fighting about sometimes. But if you had a reason to fight, someone waiting on your return, then you had a reason to come back alive.

She happily returned the kiss, savoring the each kiss as though it was her last. She broke first, and pulled back look at him before resting down on his body. Naruto rubbed her head, running his hands through her closely cut hair. "I will protect you," Naruto said. "I never break my promise to you. And I will insure that you never have to fight again. Both of you will be able to live normal lives on Sanghelios when this over. I promise." Yugito smiled happily as tears slid down her cheeks onto his chest.

All her life she'd been a weapon of destruction, trained since the day she could walk. And now she was finally free of it. All her training, all of her time spent killing, all of the years she worked herself into fits to hope that she'd die to end her misery of killing, was not coming to an end. Naruto would fight for her and Nibi so that they didn't have to kill ever again. They'd never have to fight now, thanks to him. She and Nibi both never wanted to fight; both had been too peaceful in nature to fight anyways. And now they were free. She couldn't voice her happiness, but she could show it.

So as she rose up, the thin sheet clinging to her body as she sat on his lap, she placed him back inside her, and smiled down at him. The markings on her body were complete. She had the same tattoo as him now. She looked even more beautiful with it, but it would show that she was also his second wife. But she was content with that. She didn't mind being a second wife, so long as she never had to fight ever again, she'd be more than happy to be the second wife in his life.

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Rtas stared curiously at the screen before him, wondering just who had won the game. He knew he didn't win, and Naruto most certainly didn't win either. A Tie was almost unheard of to a Sangheili, so there had to be a winner. But when he thought about it, neither of them had won. Rtas had firmly believed that Naruto didn't love her or have any feelings for her at all. When he ordered her to be killed,

the Sangheili had done so with the intentions of killing her. When Rtas glanced at Naruto, he noticed that he didn't care at all. Losing a chance for Naruto to find a perfect second mate wouldn't be acceptable, so he called it off.

This had been a trick though. Naruto had indeed bedded her, as he had just witnessed. She carried his mark, making her his wife now. They would later perform the ceremony to show proof she was his mate now, but that would be later. But this didn't bother Rtas as much as he had first thought it was. In all honesty, he was pleased by it, and offended that Naruto had out thought him, a strategists' that was second only to Thel. He'd give Naruto credit for his trickery, his deception, and his cunning maneuver. But Rtas hadn't played all of his cards at the time. He had planned on Naruto showing his hand first, which had bluffed him into believing he'd lost.

The Methane suite where the watchers would make sure the Unggoy never did anything wrong did have cameras and speakers. When Rtas had first installed them, it was because all of the Shipmasters had done so in order to keep an eye on the Unggoy. Only the Shipmasters knew that this system existed, and so, no one else would know. So since Naruto didn't know about it, he still had a card to play. He wasn't even sure it would work, but it had after the scheduled guard explained that Uzumaki said he'd take for him today. That had gotten his interest a great deal, and when he went to look, he could only stare in amazement at Naruto as he fooled him by sleeping with her. He had indeed bedded her, and he couldn't be more proud of him. Though he gave them privacy, he was still unsure of just who had won the little game.

Surely it was a Tie. Naruto had tricked him, made him believe he had no love for her, and would sooner shoot her in the back then sleep with her. Yet he was sleeping with her, and Rtas believed him. But Naruto hadn't known about the security measures in the room they were in, so Rtas had scored a point as well. With neither of them really winning, Rtas could only surmise that although they had tricked each other, one of them had to have won the match. In the end however, he decided that Naruto should have the win. If anyone deserved it, it was him.

He flicked the monitor off as they began again. He stood up, stretching his back as he did, and walked towards his bed. _You win, Onalerl Uzumaki Naruto. You win,_ he thought while climbing into his bed. In a few hours, they'd be at Earth, along with the Flood ship. He'd stop it there, but he'd need his rest to do that. His team was resting, all of them were resting. Naruto was resting in his own unique way, and Rtas would not bother him. He needed this just as much as she probably needed it. _I'll make sure you don't have to fight either, Onalerl Yugito. _

A/N

Okay, it should be noted that this isn't a harem fic. Sangheili don't believe it's wrong to have multiple wives. The more you have the more power it shows you have. Thel had multiple wives because he became Fleet Master of Particular Justice, and he already had others as well. So since Naruto is ranked as one of the strongest fighters, is very smart, and high ranking now, he can have more than one wife. They just view it as increasing their bloodline. So before anyone screams that this is no longer a Naruto Hinata fic, I wanna be very

clear, it is still a Naruto Hinata fic. I had problems in another story where I did something like this, and it caused me a lot of pain and grief, so I thought I'd just state that before someone decided to yell at me and bite my head off.

I would now like to thank everyone that has been reviewing the story. THANK YOU! I hope you all continue to leave such nice comments since this story is nearing completion.

19. Chapter 19

Chapter 19

Cooper and blood, he told himself as he came to. That's all his mind could register at the moment. All he could register was the taste of blood and cooper in his mouth. He hated the taste, but it was a good sign. It meant he was still alive. He blinked away the watery tears that burned his eyes as he slowly got up, checking the place over. It was a dark, and his systems weren't working at their peak performance now. For all he knew, his entire suit was down, but he still managed to get up, look through the blackened haze of smoke and shadows in searching of something.

"What hit us," A dry voice mumbled. John blinked.

_That's right, _John thought as he looked Neji over. _He came with me. _He wondered if he was alright. His HUD was showing error warning, suit breaches and other problems, making it nearly impossible to access the TEAMBIO. He was certain that he was in a similar condition. John alone could already tell that he had broken a new bone, well maybe not a new bone, but something he hadn't broken recently was now broken. And since the SPI armor was a variation of his own suit made cheaper, he doubted that he had fewer problems right now with his own. In fact, he was willing to bet money that his suit was so badly damaged that he could see anything at the moment.

"We fell," John told him, his voice dry and horsed like Neji's. He coughed once. "We fell down hereâ€¦ wherever "here" is anyways. I think it was twenty stories. Couldn't really tell with the speed we were falling at." He knew it was more than that, but he just liked the idea of lying to himself to keep him in high spirits about a fall like that. After the two kilometer fall, he really wanted to shorten things down. "Where are we?"

Neji coughed when his suit was unable to filter the smoke in the air as his blood covered vision finally cleared to allow him a chance to see. They were in a motor-pool under the base, at the edge of the mountain exit that the base was built into. Marines and ODSTs all lying sprawled out on the ground, some dead or alive and others wounded so bad they were lucky to even be alive. Archer missiles were thrown about, the blast knocking them from their racks. Warthogs were destroyed, bent in, melted, or crushed by support beams and chunks of stone nearly twice as large as the vehicle itself.

"The Motor Pool," he answered through his coughing fits. John could sympathize with him. His suit was having the same problem, but he had grown used to tasting and breathing in this kind of air so it didn't affect him as much. "That means we're at the bottom of the base, near

the mountain exit." He coughed out again. He shook his head and blinked the dried blood away from his eyes. Neji looked around, finding a few Marines slowly standing up while coughing.

"_Chief, please respond," _John's radio system crackled with Miranda's voice crackling with static. _"If you can hear me, find transport, head to the town of Voiâ€|" _The radio went dead. John shook his head. His orders were clear, but he didn't want to leave these men behind.

Someone in the distance of darkness coughed. "What happened?"

"I don't know," another person said between his coughing fits. "Someone hit the emergency power." There were a few grunts from someone in the distance and a few clicking noises, but no lights came on. John and Neji sighed as they shook their heads once more. Their eyes were burning from the flames that had been right at their heads where they slept. How long had they even been out?

Neji motioned for him John to follow, leading him to small opening in the side of the building that lead to another Motor Pool area. Sergeant Reynolds stood in front of a squad of Marines while saying, "If you can walk, set your boots on the line." The Marines standing could only nod in agreement.

"What's our situation, Sergeant?" Private Tayuya asked. She had a small head wound, but was okay. She just looked plain annoyed in the dark light from what they could see.

"Not sure, can't reach the Commander. We're too far underground." Reynolds replied. He shook his head. He had to blink the dust from his dry eyes again, something that he'd been doing for the past minute now. "Let's mount up. Get the hell out of these caves," he ordered while walking towards a Warthog. They all gave him crisp salutes before mounting up while one went to get the doors.

John looked at Neji, then at the rides. They had two working Warthogs, not enough for him to transport everyone out of. One had a lengthened cab, allowing more people to be transported, but no turret for defense. The other had a turret. John motioned for him to take the extended one while he took the one with the turret. He knew that Neji probably thought his would be more dangerous, but John was thinking the exact opposite. He'd be up front where the enemies would be, having them shoot at him rather than the other one. Neji would be safe.

As the Marine opened the door by hitting the controls, Neji took over for the extended Warthog, motioning for Reynolds to take shotgun in the passenger seat. While he didn't complain, he was annoyed. The door opened with a loud squeaking sound as its burned metal hinges grinded against the other. The door stopped for a moment, fighting against the partially wielded areas before busting them loose. The door opened up for them, revealing nothing but a dimly lit cave tunnel behind it.

Neji waited for John to pull out first. While John hadn't told him his reasons for making him drive the other one, Neji had understood his intentions. He was transporting more Marines, which wasn't a bad thing, it just meant that without a turret, they'd have a less likely chance of being able to stand up to anything they ran into. John's

Warthog screeched as he floored it, grinding tire tracks into the burned concrete floor of the Motor Pool. Neji followed shortly after, trailing behind by about twenty-five or thirty meters.

They drove through the tunnels' twist and turns before coming to an exit. "Second squad, we're coming out!" Reynolds yelled over the roar of the mighty engines. John pushed on the gas pedal down to the metal floor when he spotted Jackals and Grunts, all taking shots at the hiding Marines. The man on the turret opened fire, lighting them before John ran them over, spraying Grunt and Jackals bits all over the place. Without a second thought, he drove through the crack in the doors, his faceplate adjusting to the bright glare that smacked his face.

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Naruto's eyes slowly fluttered open. He blinked away the sand in his eyes. How long had he been asleep? Had he missed the battle? Something nudged him in the side and he turned to find gold blocking his vision. _That's right, _he thought. His face turned red for a moment before he grinned. _We mated until we had no more energy. _He took in a deep breath, sighing as he looked around. He was still in the same watch room from last night. Or was it morning? He wasn't too sure what time it was.

A shadow passed over him. Naruto looked up and cursed with a smile. "Hello Rtas. How are you?" Rtas stood above him, his left eye twitching. He'd been standing her for about ten minutes. He was forced to watch as the two cuddled, kissed, and even continued to mate as they slept. Rtas had heard about all of this in his life. He'd seen and heard about mates still mating while they slept. It was usually brought on by first timers. Now he was a bit angry and determined to stare him down until he got what he wanted. Naruto looked over at Yugito as she slept next to him before looking back at Rtas. "She's mine. You can't have her." Rtas rolled his eyes, a sight that was rather humorous to Naruto. Without any hesitation, he stood up, pulling the thin sheet off of him and his mate. Yugito went rigid, aware that she was now naked. She didn't let that stop her from standing straight up on the couch, hands poised like cobras ready to strike a target down. When she noticed Rtas, she dropped let her arms drop down to her side. She didn't seem to care about being seen naked. Naruto noted this, saving it for another time.

Rtas blinked once before speaking. "We must teach them how to fight," he said simply. Naruto knew what this meant. He had not only told him about the mission, but what he thought of his team. Now half of his team had been split up. Yugito, Zabuza, and Mikoto had been the only humans to come with him. But that didn't mean more hadn't come. Nagato, Yahiko and Konan had come along as well. They got stuck with patrol duty as the ship went into combat with the Flood Infected Ships. This was to let them know if the ship had been tainted while they fight. Any breaches, even in the slightest of ways could mean a Flood had gotten onboard, which meant they'd have to blow the ship up. "Better to die a quick and painless death than be servant to the Flood," Rtas had always said.

And Naruto also knew that they had shown some teamwork, but not a lot. That meant that they didn't have discipline. Maybe they did, but from what he saw, they didn't have any. So that would only leave one option. "How much time do we have before we arrive," Naruto asked. He

needed time. Time was probably a luxury he didn't have. And he'd spent most of his time mating with Yugito.

"A few more hours, three at the most," he answered. "It dropped out for just a moment. We managed to do some damage to it, but it wasn't enough to take it out. Now it's nothing but a burning ship. If we're lucky it will burn up in the atmosphere of the planet as it reenters or it will just be torn to tiny pieces while in Slipspace." Rtas added. Naruto liked the last option. Even if the ship burned up in space on reentry, that wouldn't mean that it had destroyed all of the Flood onboard. No. It would simply scatter it, give them a better chance to hide, strike and consume the world.

"I will get them down to the training hall. Get the others prepared. We shall test them the same way you tested my first team." Naruto walked up to Yugito, Rtas leaving as he did. As the door slid shut, Naruto pulled her in close, her bare body pressing against his. "You won't be fighting anymore. I made a promiseâ€| and I will keep it." Yugito blinked once before smile at him. Naruto returned the smile, his tail wrapping around her body before teasing her. She winced at the touch before he pulled back. "I will send an Unggoy with clothes. For now, rest and relax. Your services will not be needed unless you wish only to watch." She bowed her head as Naruto walked out of the room with his robes on.

As the door slid shut, Yugito looked around before lying back down on the couch. She had the faintest of smiles. She didn't have to fight anymore. She was free. All of the training, all of the pain, all of the tears, could now be forgotten. She'd be happy with him so long as she never had to fight again.

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Nagato was enjoying a nice hour of rest from walking through corridors of _Shadow of Intent _while reflecting on his life. He wasn't very proud of the things he'd done or planned, but when he really stopped to think about them now, he kind of found it hard not to laugh. The wars back home seemed so small to the wars up here. They had been fighting over small pieces land while the Covenant and Humans were fighting over planets ranging from all sizes. He really thought it was funny how-

The door opened, jarring him from his thoughts. A black object smacked into his face, and he closed his eyes. It was clothing. "Get dressed and meet us in the training hall. Haer will show you the way," Naruto informed him before leaving. Nagato stared down at the clothing in his hands before rolling his eyes and getting up. No point in arguing with someone that had an entire crew that would jump at the chance to kill him.

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Zabuza wiped the water away from his face, his tiny eyes the size of saucer plates now after being hit in the face with a bucket of water. Naruto stood at the door with his arms crossed over his chest. He looked around for a bucket, but couldn't find one. Naruto made it short and to the point. "Get dressed, along with your mate, and follow Rauk to the training hall." He left.

Zabuza wiped the water away from his face again. "On the off chance

you know how he did that, could you please teach me how to do it?" He looked at Rauk, who leaned against the door frame with what he was figured was a smug look.

"Sure," he replied, hitting a switch on the wall. A bubble appeared from the wall, floated towards him, and remained there in a field of shimmering white energy before Rauk pressed another button. The stasis field shimmered brightly before dissipating, along with some of the water while the rest came down, smacking Mikoto in the face this time. She shrieked as she jumped up, her hands ready for anything. She too was butt naked. "Any questions," Rauk's eyes lingered with the females' body before looking away. He knew that staring at another's mate was close to a challenge. So he dare not look directly at her in her current state. "Get dressed," he barked as the door shut.

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Yahiko and Konan both blinked as Naruto stared through her and at Yahiko. They were currently having sex with her on top. Naruto actually seemed to dismiss this and just speak with Yahiko, unaware or uncaring that Konan, every now and then, would lean back and then forward while pretending to listen. When Naruto had first entered, he had blinked two times before shaking his head as he entered with two deals of clothing. Both of them were slightly mortified that they had been caught in the act, since they weren't dating. Konan had once best described their relationship back when it was well talked about. "We're fuck friends," she stated again for the third time. Naruto once again dismissed this after he'd asked again how long their relationship had been going on. _Clearly we missed something with this guy,_ Konan thought.

Yahiko, for the most part, just paid attention to Naruto, knowing full well that he probably had his friends with him. He couldn't see them, but that didn't mean that they weren't watching them somehow. When Naruto handed him his clothing, he instantly regretted his words. "We'll be down in ten minutes," he muttered out as he reached for Konan's well curved hips. In a flash, Naruto was holding Konan up by her arms and dragging her naked form out of the room, her eyes wide in shock.

"You have one minute to get to the training hall before I kill your mate and then you." Naruto replied, hissing each word as he did. The door hissed shut, almost as if it too was expressing its anger.

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John floored the accelerator, making the two marines, Tayuya on the gunner and Deidara up front with a Jackhammer Launcher, scream with joy as they jumped the broken highway. Tayuya had been a Marine ever since she was brought to Earth. She had been selected for the Spartan III program, but was a washout. She hadn't made the cut in the end, and as a result, became a Marine. She could have been an ODS, but from what her report said, along with a few others claimed, she was seeing a Lieutenant from the ODS of the 105th, or Helljumper as they were also known, meaning she couldn't be one. Deidara, well he didn't much about Deidara, other than every time he blew something up or something was seen blowing up, he'd scream, "That's art, baby! Yeah," as something blew up in his field of vision. John was a little

wary about letting him use the Jackhammer Launcher, but it wasn't like he could drive and shoot something like that off at the same time.

They slammed down on the other street, the tires crying in protest from such a beating as they continued on their merry little way. Behind them, Neji brought up the rear, his Transport Warthog not crying at all as he did the same thing. Behind him, another Warthog did the same, its tires protesting as John's had, but still kept going.

John knew they'd all be okay so long as they all stuck together. The only thing that had worried them was the Cruiser that appeared overhead, flying directly over them without stopping. He had had to stop Deidara from firing on the ship, even though his instincts demanded the same thing. When it passed over them fully, he was able to breathe easily before he saw the gap up ahead. He floored it, flying over it. And now, as he pulled up to a small section where roadblocks of every kind sat, he could only curse his luck.

"Damn," Tayuya muttered.

The other two Warthogs stopped behind them, all of the dismounting when they saw the large gap. The support beams and rods were still connected, but there'd be no way to get the vehicles across unless they wanted to try throwing them. John motioned for the group to follow him across. He took point while Neji took up the rear. One by one they all jumped from one side to the other. When they were all across, Neji ran ahead, his SPI armor making his blend in with the concrete road.

"_Master Chief," _Miranda's voice crackled over his helmet. "_Finally a good connection. Truth has excavated a Forerunner artifact. We have to assume it's the Ark." _

"_Keep pushing to the town of Voi, Chief," _Johnson ordered. "_Resupply bird will meet you in the next valley." _

John looked back at the Marines before he got a red light on his HUD. He lowered down to a crouch as he began running, making sure to keep his head down. The Marines mimicked his run, each one huffing as they ran up to a few metal containers. Neji was nowhere to be seen, but John wouldn't put it past him to be right in front of him without him knowing it. The Spartan slowly looked around the containers, finding a squad of Marines pinned from enemy fire. A single Brute in blue armor with three Grunts was keeping them pinned down.

John spun around, his BR (Battle Rifle) spitting out three round bursts into their heads. The Marines joined in, combining firing on the stunned Brute. In short order it was brought down, its armor flickering with sparks before dying out. The Brute was dead before the suit even lost power.

Plasma bolts sizzled near their feet, forcing John to whip around, his rifle up and searching for the targets. He found two Grunts on the soft soil dead, their blood oozing onto the ground from missing heads while a third was in the process of going down. John caught a flash of movement up to the left of his vision, quickly whipping his gun to see the threat. He could just barely make out the muzzle of a sniper rifle with smoke still trailing out of the muzzle between two

metal beams.

It was Neji. John didn't know or care on how he got up there. He was only glade he was up there. This would give them an advantage in pushing back the enemy.

Neji gave him a red light on his HUD again, alerting him of more enemies. John gave simple hand signs to the squad of Marines, all of them nodding say for Deidara and Hidan, a man that just enjoyed killing about anything. When the Marines moved forward, guns at the ready, Deidara and Hidan followed their example, their guns up and ready for anything. Deidara had put the Jackhammer Launcher on his back, making him a bit off balance when he switched it for the shotgun.

More Grunts appeared out of concrete tubes, boxes and ditches, all hefting needler and plasma pistols. Their shots were wild as let loose a fury of barks and yelps as they charged them. They were mowed down with ease, nothing too complicated for a squad of well trained Marines and two Spartans. When the last one dropped they rounded a corner of stack shipping containers, ditches and concrete tubes to see a squad of Marines pinned down by Brutes and Grunts inside two small warehouses.

John gave a rapid green light to Neji, the signal for "Take them out," in Spartan terms. Neji complied, taking off Brute heads and whipping some around when their shields and armor could withstand them, knocking them into their fellow Brutes and sometimes on top of Grunts. John rushed in after motioning for the Marines to split up into two teams. One team would rush the complex, offering aid to the wounded that fired from their fallen forms while another would flank from the right, using the tubes for cover. He would run up the center.

Deidara, Hidan, Tayuya and Guren flanked from the right, their weapons at the read as they sneaked through the tubes. The others ran up to the complex, shooting at the Brutes and Grunts when they got a good sight on them. John ran straight at them, not using cover as he unloaded on them. Being hit from three spots at once would throw them into confusion, allowing him to rush them without having them actually target him.

When the two teams got ready, which was almost instantly, a thunderous echo of gunfire erupted from all directions. The Brutes looked around, searching for the sources of the attack. They spotted John and one went down missing half of its face. Another went down when a grenade landed in the middle of their little group, throwing them forward with missing limbs and holes body parts. Two fell down dead, suffering from a piece of shrapnel that had gone clean through the back of their heads. The Grunts began to scatter, all of them waving their massive arms around as they tried to flee the scene. It didn't work. The Marines in hiding popped up out of cover, assault rifles leveled on their heads. They opened fire, spitting rounds in their faces, ripping off their masks, while other rounds peppered and destroyed their methane tanks, spewing blue flames into the air when they caught fire.

In short order, the once looming threat was dealt with. The Marines in hiding walked up the Master Chief, offering up crisp salute as they did before he could return it. Deidara, Hidan and Tayuya walked

out of cover, trotting up to the others as they did.

The lead Marine, Lieutenant Richard Lash, also known as Hawk, stepped forward, his one good eye blinking lazily as he stared down the reinforcements. "Good to see you, Master Chief. We could use the support. Recon just reported Covenant armor ahead. We'll need to hold out until Pelicans with heavy weapons drop in," he explained. John nodded.

Hawk began giving out orders to the other Marines while John asked Neji a simple question. "How much ammo you got left," he asked simply.

"_Two clips," _Neji replied. John knew that might be enough, but he wasn't certain. There was no telling how long it would take the Pelicans to get here, and there was also no telling on how strong of a force the Covenant might send to stop them. If at anything, this just put more pressure on them than it did the Covenant.

"Understood. Keep a sharp eye. And let me know if you see anything heading this way." He ordered. He got a green light. Neji had gone back to radio silence. As John looked back at the Marines, he was surprised to see them all taking up highly defensible targets. Well he wasn't that surprised, but he was surprised nonetheless. Most Marines took up obvious defensive positions that would leave them vulnerable to flanking maneuvers. Obviously Hawk was a better commander than what he appeared to be.

John walked up to where Hidan was having trouble reloading his battle rifle. Without so much as a hello, he took the weapon from him; magazine included, and showed him how to properly reload the weapon. Hidan blinked once before muttering something he didn't catch. "Thanks," he replied in the end. John nodded, handing the weapon to him as he did. Tayuya was crouching in the tall grass, hardly noticeable somehow while Deidara was back to hefting the large Jackhammer Launcher beside her.

John's radio crackled, hissed, and then Neji's voice came over the radio. _"Three Phantoms on approach. I say again: Three Phantoms on approach." _John cursed. _"I can see one Wraith tank on the way as well." _

John cursed inwardly. The Phantoms were his main concern. The Wraith tank he could deal with. But three Phantom carrying God only knew what scared him more. If it was a squad of Grunts and Brutes, they'd be okay. If it was a squad of nothing but Brutes, they'd have some trouble, but still end up being okay. If it was a squad of Hunters backed by Brutes or worse, Chieftains, they'd have a slim chance at winning, even with him on home turf.

"Alright everyone, we got company coming so let's set the table!" Hawk shouted. "Keep me updated on that Wraith. Let me know when you can see the eyes of that bastard driving it!" Neji honestly wondered if that was a joke or not, but nonetheless, complied with the order. John gave him a questioning glance that was instantly answered. Had this guy done something before they got here? "We set up Anti-Tank mines all throughout that patch of land in the middle of the valley. We set them to remote detonation. We'll blow them all to hell when they get here, along with that fucking tank!"

John nodded, understanding now why they didn't use them when they could have. They'd blow the one chance to use them. _"Tank is now holding position." _Neji informed them. This got Hawk cursing. _"Phantoms are still on approach." _

"Let me make some art out of them!" Deidara hefted the Jackhammer Launcher, targeting the one up front as it rounded over the hill and into plain sight.

"No. Target the one in the middle." Tayuya ordered. Deidara was about the question that before he spotted the reason why. They were flying close. Close enough that they were almost touching. If he hit the one in the middle, two might go down instead of one. "Wait for me to tell you when though." Tayuya added a second later, watching as Deidara's finger twitched on the trigger. He let out a depressed sigh as he waited for what felt like eternity before Tayuya said, "Fire away," in a calm voice.

"Hell yeah! Artâ€¦!" a plume of smoke snaked into the sky, covering Deidara and Tayuya in black soot from the vapor trails. The missile streaked upwards, swerved around a small turret manned by a Grunt, and slammed into the belly of the middle Phantom. It halted for a moment in the sky, its ass end hitting the front of the Phantom trailing behind it. Its engines screamed in protest and its fins stopped working. There was a rumble when the second missile streaked into the sky, slamming into the belly again. The Phantom began to break apart from the twin missiles. It was gutted. "â€¦IS A BLAST!" two purple fireballs appeared in the sky and began plummeting down to Earth, slamming into the hill and rolling down it as a chunk of rolling death. The Wraith tank pushed forward, dodging the chunks of debris.

Hawk raised a detonator that he pulled from his vest pouch. "This is art!" He screamed back as he clicked the button. Thunder echoed from the center of the valley, flames shooting high into the air. Molten metal rained down with specks of earth and body parts. Twisted metal that glowed cherry red slammed down next to the Marines that cried in triumph. As the smoke and dust cleared, a large crater ten meters in diameter and three meters deep remained a testament to the Marines old saying. "If it's worth doingâ€¦!" Hawk began.

"It's worth overdoing!" Two Marines finished.

The roar of a Pelican got everyone's attention, forcing them to look up into the sky as two Pelicans flew into view. Both were carrying Warthogs at the moment. They swooped in low, the ramps unloading as they came to a stop a few meters above the ground. The Warthogs were released, their all-terrain tires bouncing them up and down for a moment before settling out. _"Brutes have plenty of armor between here and Voi, Chief," _Johnson told him over them radio. _"But this Warthog should help you punch on through." _The two Pelicans flew up into the air and then out of sight.

"We'll follow on foot," John told them as he caught sight of two Brute Choppers in the distance. Neji was already beside him, thinking the same thing. "Get your men in the Warthogs. We'll take the Brute Choppers." With that, the Marines loaded up. Deidara called shotgun while Tayuya manned the gunner again. Hidan took Gunner seat for the other Warthog while Hawk took the wheel with Reynolds up front

pulling shotgun. Deidara and Tayuya got a dark skinned man named James M. Buster for a driver.

John and Neji ran at full speed towards the two Choppers as they spun around, their massive wheels tilling up the soil as they flew towards them. Although crude in design, they did work at mowing down infantry and anything smaller than a Scorpion Tank. But John and Neji were smart enough to know how to dodge them, board them, and with a little luck, knock the drivers out of the seat. The first one peeled off, heading straight for Neji as he hauled ass away from John. The second one boosted forward, intent on running John over. At the last second, John jumped away, letting it come to a dead stop in the base of the steep hill. Its head bounced off of the dashboard, if you could call it that anyways. Without noticing it, John had reached up, grabbed it by the head and gave it a quick twist and yank, freeing the head from the neck with a sickening pop. He pushed the body away, and jumped on it.

Neji ran up the rock wall, jumped backward, and flipped down behind the Brute. He quickly jumped onto the back of it, grabbing the Brute by the shoulder and wailed onto the back of its head. It jerked forward with each blow before grabbing him by the arm to throw him. Neji caught the rims of the tires, planted his feet on the turret, gave it a victory grin, and then jumped up to kick it out with his left foot. The force of the blow sent the Brute head first into the ground before it slammed into a small set of stones that broke apart when he hit it. Because of this however, the Chopper skidded out of control, its massive wheel going completely sideways before Neji managed to correct it. He hit the boost, turned it around, and ran over two more, watching with a slight grin as they disappeared under the massive tires.

The other two Brute Choppers turned around, firing on him before they bloomed into fireballs. Deidara's Warthog came screaming beside him, a thin trail of smoke still coming off the Jackhammer Launcher. It was spent now, but he didn't seem to care. Tayuya opened up with the turret, gunning down the snipers that tried to pick them off. Neji revved the engine of his Chopper, took aim as he spun around, and fire on the floating platform, knocking it off the Gravlift that kept it stationary in the air, killing the hiding Brute when it fell.

The other Warthog and John drove past him, forcing him to peel out in order to catch up to them. The Marines that didn't have a ride trailed behind him in a slow run making Neji slow down, offering his vehicle assistance whenever needed. As they drove into a tunnel made in the side of a cave, Neji caught sight of two Brutes throwing away the bodies of Marines. John was already on top of one of them while Tayuya and Hidan tore the other one apart with the turrets. The remaining Marines took over the flipped over Warthog that was easily pushed over by the combination of Marines while the last two took up the two Brute Choppers.

Neji drove down beside John, eyeing the next area. A massive hill with a road that would lead to Voi, a single visible Wraith tank and a bunch of Brute Choppers drove on the ground. The Wraith tank turned to greet them, its plasma mortar gathering plasma before discharging it.

"Move!" Reynolds screamed. The scream of tires peeling out on the concrete road thundered above the roar of the soaring plasma and

engines as they all jumped the broken road. The ball of plasma slammed into the ground behind them, making a crater and glassing the rest of it when it was finished.

The Warthogs went down the left path while John and Neji took the Brute Choppers down the right. Two Brute Choppers boosted out from behind the hill, their weapons firing down on them. Their shots were wild and unfocused. John boosted forward towards the closer one. It did the same at the same moment. John jumped out of his, rolling along the ground just as they smashed together into a ball of fire. As he rolled he got back to his, cocked his arm back, and punched the other Brute in the face, knocking it off the Chopper, sending it skidding into the side of the hill. He quickly stole it, pulling it backwards and then following the others. Neji took point.

As they rounded the side of the hill, the Warthogs came screaming past them, their turrets firing like crazy on the following Choppers. John floored it, running one over, smashing it in half as he did. He quickly spun the Chopper around, firing the weapons it had as he did. They were wild, but they still hit the Shade Turret above them. The Grunt inside was blown up instantly. A Wraith tank came down on them, its massive thrusters boosting it forward. With a combination of fire from four Choppers and three Warthogs, it was no match. The front dented in, melted, and then blew up. The anti-gravity units cut out, making it skid along the ground before being rendered useless.

More Brute Choppers screamed over the hill, all of them firing wild shots as a Phantom dropped a Wraith tank. "More targets!" Reynolds screamed. Deidara raised his new toy, the Fuel Rod, took aim, and fired on the first approaching Chopper. The ball of radioactive energy slammed into the front of it, melting it in one shot. The Brute didn't give up though. It pushed forward, along with the others. They all opened fire on them. The UNSC forces scattered, their gunners unloading on them as they passed. Two Brutes went down with multiple holes in their body. John ran over another one, happy to get another kill.

Neji boosted forward, heading straight for another Brute Chopper. He jumped at the last second, rolled, and then ran up the hill as the two Choppers collided into a fiery ball of twisted metal. He switched from his pistol to his assault rifle as he ran up the hill in a small dust cloud. John pushed the team forward, taking out the second Wraith tank while the Brute Choppers all fell around them. One had driven off the edge, giving it a splattering death when it hit the bottom. The Wraith tank tried to follow, failed, and then died when its reactor was breached. White liquid flames sprang up, killing the driver and turret worker.

Neji ran up behind the Wraith tank on the bridge, grabbed two grenades and slammed them into the reactor on the back. He jumped away as they detonated; spewing white flames onto the ground that instantly glassed the concrete and killing the Wraith tank, driver and gunner. As the Phantom passed overhead, its turrets turned on him. He jumped behind the burning Wraith, knowing it could take a few shots. Turret fire, Chopper fire, and Fuel Rods made it leave the place as the vehicle armada drove up. Neji gave them all a thumbs up, showing he was okay. John nodded approvingly at his handiwork. He was pleased with the Spartan.

Neji jumped onto the front of John's Chopper, pulling his sniper rifle

out as he drove him. He took aim at the hiding Brutes and fired on them. Two went down with one shot. Another went down a second later. Then another. And then another. By the time they got up to the blockade, ten Brutes lay dead by his hands.

"Dismount," Hawk shouted. "We're walking until we can get rid of these damn things!" There were a few groans, but they'd walk regardless.

Plasma fire erupted when they made it to the Gravlift held station. They all took cover behind vehicles that had made it this far and stacks of crates and the blue-purple barriers that had been put up. Neji slung his sniper rifle up, pressing the butt of the gun tight against his shoulder before sighting out the Shade Turret. A single Grunt was inside was looking in and out of the Shade Turret, obviously having trouble seeing them. When it stuck its head out again, he squeezed off a round, blowing its head apart with a single shot. The Brutes all turned to face them. A single Chieftain in the back pointed towards them while barking to its men.

"Mow them down, men!" Hawks shouted, his weapon already spitting out rounds into the rushing Brutes that didn't have Jump Packs. Neji took aim at the Chieftain, fired three rounds into its skull and watched it topple over a second later. Deidara unloaded with his Fuel Rod until it was spent and watched as the balls of radioactive energy melted the targets that they slammed into. The Marines and John combined fire, mowing down the other units that got in their way. Before long, the place was clear of all hostiles.

A bright barrier stood before them when they got to the tunnel that would lead to Voi. John hit it with a plasma grenade and watched it blow up. Deidara sighed in relief as he watched the barrier fall. "So pretty," he whispered.

Haer

Tayuya turned to look at him, disgust and confusion written in her eyes. "Has anyone ever told you that you're fucking nuts?" Deidara wasn't listening. He was obviously having an Explosion Orgasm as Hidan seemed to call it during their time on the Ring World.

A Pelican roared overhead, dropping a single Warthog before others appeared, picking up and dropping the other Warthogs along with others. Miranda was piloting it. "Lord Hood?" The image of Lord Hood appeared on her screen. "We made it."

"_Music to my ears, commander. What about the Ark?"_

Her face went grim as she replied. "Fully uncovered, sir."

"_Then we don't have much time," _he explained. _"Marines, the Prophet of Truth doesn't know it yet, but he's about to get kicked right off his throne. We will take our city back. And drive our enemies into the grave they've been so happily digging. One final push is all that remains." _John looked over to Neji, then the Pelicans, and then to the remaining Spartan III's. Sasuke was in the driver seat of a Transport Warthog with Haku up front and Konohamaru in the back. Tenten was up front in another with Hanabi behind the wheel. They looked at each other and then loaded up.

_One more time, _Neji thought.

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They were dressed in black Japanese training clothing. When they entered into the training hall, they all gasped. All around the naked form of the chained up Konan were energy swords. All of them were held by invisible Sangheili. In front of her with its back to them was Naruto, dressed in a silver version of the same suit, only sleeveless. He had only one katana, its blade lit at the moment. Without turning, he spoke to them.

"We have been disgraced, and that is something I shall not bear." He turned to face them, his face nothing but a serious look. Yahiko looked over Konan. Despite being chained up and left hanging above the ground by a foot, she looked okay. She was covered in sweat from head to toe and her hair was still a mess. Naruto closed his eyes, speaking slowly as the energy swords moved up to him. "You have no discipline in our eyes. We lost to a single Flood Infected Human. And I will not tolerate failure. We will not tolerate failure. To fail is to die in the way of the Sangheili. I will not die. Not now and not tomorrow. If you wish to regain our honor, to prove that you are worthy to even call yourself Shinobi of our once proud world, you will beat me and my teammate in combat to save her life."

"You want us to fight you and these guys by ourselves?" Mikoto asked, all color draining from her face. She knew could take on one, but thirty of them, all of them cloaked. No. Not even if she had her jutsus, her chakra, and Sharingan would she risk it.

Naruto chuckled. "No. You will choose my teammate for me." He motioned towards the cloaked Sangheili. "Choose, you have ten seconds."

"The one on your left," Yahiko stated hastily. Naruto grinned.

"Good choice and this proves that you love her."

"We're justâ€¦" The Sangheili appeared before them, its cloak gone in a flash of flickering particles. Two of its mandibles missing, an energy sword in its left hand; it was Rtas Vadum. Yahiko stopped talking the moment he saw him. One thought raced through all of their minds as the others disappeared from sight, their energy swords flickering out. Yahiko voiced everyone's thoughts. "Oh fuck,"

"Oh fuck indeed, human." Rtas looked up at Konan, dragging a claw across her amply breasts. This got Yahiko's anger spiking. No one but him had ever touched her in an overly friendly way. Rtas had a grin when he spied this. _You can lie to the others and maybe yourself, but you cannot fool me, human or your own subconscious, _he thought. "In our culture, we kill the male if he impregnates a female without proper marriage unless they bare a mark on their bodies, showing proof that the mate has left them for battle while a wedding is prepared. But what you are doing is, borderline to this. We will kill you, then the child, and then her if she is impregnated by you without a mark or marriage."

Yahiko balled his hands into fists.

Naruto opened his eyes, pointing his katana at the throat of Konan.

"You have twenty minutes to beat me and Rtas. All you must do is cut us. Kill us if you can, but if you cannot beat us in twenty minutes," he dragged the tip of the blade between her breasts, drawing a bit of blood, "I will kill her myself." Yahiko and Nagato got into battle stances first followed by the others. Naruto had a grin on his face. "Nowâ€¦| came at us!"

20. Chapter 20

Chapter 20

"_Chief," _Miranda began over the radio as the team of Spartans drove through the tunnel that would lead to the hole they needed punched in the Anti-Air defenses. From what satellite information they could get, it was one of the areas still damaged from the first attack and had minimal defenses stacked around it. If they were going to punch through any part of it, this was going to be it. But from what they'd seen so far, they'd have to go through a few factors that had once been used for making guns, vehicles, and on occasions, new types of weapons. The factories themselves still housed plenty of workers, all of them people that had volunteered to move in and help jump start the place when all of the Covenant forces were taken care of. _"The Prophet of Truth has found the Ark. Our only chance of stopping him is a surprise airily assault. Clear this sector of Covenant Anti-Air defenses. Make a hole for the Admirals Ships. Good hunting. Key's out," _the radio crackled and then went dead as they came up to the first entrance.

Broken down Warthogs were thrown around the place, along the bodies of their former passengers.

The mission, as simple as it was, was also complicated. In order to complete the mission, they had a time frame. Not much of a time frame, but they had one. They had twenty minutes to clear out the Anti-Air units, or Lord Hood was going down on the new Frigate, _Forward Unto Dawn_. John knew his team could do it. They had survived the first attack on Earth, helped take out the Prophet of Regret, escaped High Charity, rescued more of their people on Delta Halo, and were now almost to the end of the war. With this final shove it would be over, and the odd thing was that no matter what, John kept worrying about Cortana.

He shoved those thoughts aside. He didn't need to be worrying about her at the moment. He had his own problems to deal with. The area they were running through was in lockdown, meaning no one got in or out. Hundreds of Marines were guarding the facility, all of them survivors from the first, second, third and fourth assaults on the same spot in order to keep it as damaged as they could. Now all they had to do was last just a bit longer. That was all they could do.

John motioned for his team to hit the door, each one raising their weapons as he walked towards the controls. He pushed the button and the bolts hissed and cried as they opened up, letting the door slide into two parts. Neji, Tenten and Hanabi rushed in first, their SPI armor quickly making them vanish from sight. John went in next, his assault rifle up and looking for targets to kill. He didn't see any. Sasuke, Konohamaru and Haku came up behind him, their battle rifles at the ready. The last thing to enter was the Warthog, Tayuya back on

the gunner and Reynolds at the wheel.

Neji gave them all a red light from his position on the next floor by the door. John gave him an amber light, blinking it twice to tell him to wait for them. A green light came back, showing he acknowledged the order. John gave a quick hand signal to his team before they all ran up the stairs, blending from shadow to shadow until they were behind or beside Neji. John wasn't sure if he was behind him or someone else, but he really didn't care. What was on the other side got his attention. Grunts with plasma grenades on their belts, needlers at the ready and Jackals with gauntlet shields all patrolled the area, all of them listening to a speech being given by the Prophet of Truth.

John gave a simple motion to Neji, signaling for him to hit the door controls while the others got into position. Neji slow gave him a green light, showing he understood as he slinked his way over to the control panel. For the others, it was a simple jog to key areas for flanking. As soon as Neji hit the door controls, they'd go running towards the door. John stood by the stairs, his body bathed in shadows. Tenten took up residence at the door controls by Neji. Sasuke and Konohamaru meshed with the shadows of a set of conduits and support beams while Hanabi was by the edge of the stairs.

John gave them a countdown with his lights. Their HUDs lit up with the three colors that slowed ticked down from red to amber to green. When it changed to green Neji hit the door controls, Hanabi tossed a grenade into the middle of them as they all turned to the massive doors as its dried bolts and circuits screamed in protest. Tenten began mowing them down from above with Neji while Konohamaru and Sasuke mowed them down from the left. Any of them that ran for the stairs were greeted by John, his gun, and occasionally, the butt of his gun. By the time the door opened, there was nothing left for Tayuya to shot. She gave a low moan in protest, but decided not to complain too much about it. One shot from a plasma pistol was enough to melt your face, chest, or limb.

John gave quick motions for his team to take the way around as he went to the door controls. If anyone was going to get by whatever was on the other side, it'd be them. He could do it too, but could he do without being seen while being so close to the enemy that he was practically staring them in their ugly face? probably not considering that his suit wasn't designed with a camouflage system like theirs was.

As soon as they walked around the corner, John hit the button to open the massive door and gunfire sounded. His first instincts told him to raise his gun and shoot anything that moved. But he shoved that felling away when he got a handful of green lights on his HUD, telling him that they were all okay. The Warthog drove up beside him, Tayuya grinning like a mad girl ready to kill something. John couldn't blame her. From what he managed to read on her report during the long drive here, she had lost everything on her world. Her family and friends at the hands of the Brutes. He had lost people too, but he never let it get to him.

The doors parted; their gasses and liquids hissing as they were pulled apart. Plasma and spike rounds flew over their heads from wild shots. Tayuya hit the buttons to activate the gun. Its .50 caliber rounds began chewing up the Grunts and Jackals up front. A Brute in

the back tried to order commands to its squad, but they were too busy running around in fear, some screaming for mercy, others shooting at anything that came into their field of vision. Reynolds floored it towards the Brute as it began making a break for a Ghost. That was the last thing they needed it to get in.

John raised his rifle, firing tight bursts into its head and chest, but doing very little for the distance they were at. When the Brute got to the Ghost, it suddenly dropped down dead. John saw it fall over, but couldn't see anything down there. He quickly ran towards the dead Brute, his rifle up and searching for a target. When he got to the body, he still couldn't see anything. A shadow moved to his left and he whipped around, his rifle up. Sasuke was standing in the corner, his assault rifle still smoking.

Sasuke gave him a green light, almost as if he was mocking him. John dismissed this. He quickly jumped onto the Ghost, Sasuke doing the same for the other one while Hanabi got the door. It opened without a sound.

"_Kilo-Two-Three, this is _Forward Unto Dawn," Lord Hood's voice came over the radios. _"I need a sip rep, Commander." _

"_Atmospheric disturbances intensifying above the artifact, sir," _she replied with a small hint of worry.

"_And Sierra-117?" _

"_Moving as fast as he can, sir. I know he'll get it down." _

John looked over at the others as he ran down a Brute in blue armor and two Grunts before turning to boost over two more between some metal shipping crates. Plasma fire erupted in front of him but he drove through it, the hot sun flames causing his shields to scream in protest and his skin to burn from the heat. As he boosted forward, he came to a shake connected by a wooden bridge. When he looked up, he could see the Phantom hovering overhead. A Missile Turret was still on its support structure, but the Brute that was charging it were more than ready to take it.

A trail of smoke appeared and one Brute went down. Off in the distance where they'd exited the first of what was many factors stood Tenten, her sniper rifle out and targeting anything on the place. Another shot went out, this one clipping one Grunts' methane pack and killing the second with a headshot. Without a leader, the Grunts ran around aimlessly, screaming in fear before they were put down by combined fire from Sasuke and Konohamaru.

Haku ran inside the building, breaking limbs and removing weapons as he ran to the top of it. When he got the top, he found the Marine to be dead, a spike round stuck in his skull. The weapon was still on the hold.

Good.

He quickly manned it, targeting the Anti-Air Wraith tank with it. A few shots and it went down, exploding into a ball of liquid metal and white flames. A Phantom appeared overhead. He quickly targeted this, firing round after round at it until, just as it was about to drop its cargo, fell to the ground in explosive heap of twisted metal,

crushing most of the Wraith tank it had just dropped. Another Phantom appeared and it too went down before it could drop its cargo. John wondered just how much training they got, where they had been trained, and who had trained them. They were showing skills that took him years to earn. Maybe they were more than what he thought they were.

"Hell yeah," A female screamed. "Fly-boys are going to love us for that!"

John pushed her words out of his mind. He needed to stay on task. He checked his ammo as he ran across the container field, ducking and weaving his way through them just in case snipers began trying to pick him off. Hanabi and Tenten were already back with him, both doing the same thing. The Warthog was down on the ground, its driver driving like a mad man as he ran over corpses of fallen Grunts and Brutes without blinking. Sasuke was on the ground with Konohamaru, Neji and Haku all following him in newly stolen Ghosts. John knew they'd be on foot once they got inside, but speed was essential for this to work.

As John rounded the corner, spying the giant ball of twisted metal that had once been the Phantom; he could just barely make out the outline of the Wraith tank. It was turned to face him, its plasma mortar gathering energy for a discharge. John paid it no mind when it fired. The blast only served one thing: Proving that Brutes weren't Elites. The ball of plasma melted only a small section of the Phantom, but melted the remains of the Wraith tank. The pilot gave out one simple scream before dying.

Plasma bolts smacked against his armor, making him cringe as his shields dropped in a matter of seconds. Combined fire from the plasma pistol was enough to take them down in his current state. A Ghost flew down on them, Sasuke behind the "Wheel" as he turned it to face more of the little bastards. He boosted over them, splattering them and cutting them in half before coming to a stop at the stairs. Plasma fire and spikes peppered the vehicle, forcing Sasuke to abandon it just as a plasma grenade stuck to the front of it. John ran out of cover, his rifle up firing at the potential targets. The roar of a turret being fired forced him to look up.

"They just keep coming!"

"Check your fire, it's the Chief!" There was a small pause before the same voice echoed from the turret. "Flush 'em out, sir! We'll nail 'em with the .50!" She raised her rifle, the gunner looking a bit freaked out by the enemy at hand. He had every reason to be. They were up against a Chieftain with a plasma turret, a squad of well trained and armed Grunts and a few Brutes. Not something that would be easy to deal with. But for John and the Spartans, it would be a breeze.

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Konan blinked once as she watched them prepare to fight Naruto. Her heart seemed to sore at the idea of them fighting him for her. She knew she was the only family that Yahiko and Nagato had now. They stuck together like siblings, fought like siblings, even acted like siblings at times. Her relationship with Yahiko had always been something that made Nagato a bit down, but he never let that stop him

from sticking up for her. Seeing his determined glare on Naruto, she honestly wondered if they could win against them.

Naruto had a strange grin when Yahiko rushed him, no weapons in hand. He threw a punch that Naruto swiftly evaded and returned with a punch to the gut. The force of the blow was only half of his normal strength, but it was enough to make him lose all of his air and double over on his fist. Nagato came up right behind him, a fist cocked back and ready to fly. Naruto tossed Yahiko away, reached forward and stopped his fist before it could be thrown. Nagato raised his leg to kick him, but Naruto grabbed it at the thigh, shoving it back down to the ground and smashing his head into his. Nagato reeled back, his momentum lost from the blow. Naruto pushed him forward, sent a series of punches into his chest and gut and then threw him at Yahiko as he ran at him. The two crashed to the ground as in a heap.

Rtas shook his head as he effortlessly dodged Zabuza and Mikoto's combined attacks. This was child's play for him. They couldn't touch him. He reached out to stop Mikoto's kick, grabbing her by the ankle and tossing it into Zabuza. Zabuza caught her, his momentum stopped for a moment, but he pushed forward nonetheless. As she jumped out of his arms they rushed him again. He blocked their strikes, returned with his own, and once again had them on the ground. But they weren't giving up. Rtas admired that. Determination to win was always a good thing. But too much meant arrogance, and he'd have to break them of that.

Naruto ducked backward, dodging Nagato's roundhouse kick, then rolled back, jumped to his feet by springing off his hands, and stopped Yahiko's punch. The two stared each other down for a moment before Yahiko was kicked in the chest, sending him skidding backwards into Nagato. Nagato tripped over him, but rolled with the fall so that he could jump back up to his feet. He reached forward, his hands reaching for Naruto's sword. Naruto grinned as he stabbed him in the left hand while punching him in the chest. Nagato growled in pain before gripping Naruto's wrist. Naruto grabbed his wrist as well, blinked, and prepared to break it. Nagato pulled back, removing the sword from his hand and allowing him to get out of Naruto's hold.

Yahiko got back to his feet, screamed, and ran at Naruto. Naruto reversed his grip on the katana and swung it at him. Yahiko jumped over him, landing down behind him and got smacked away by Naruto's tail. His tail wasn't that hard, but if it was backed by enough force it could move you. Yahiko rolled with the blow of his fall, got back to his feet, and charged Naruto. Naruto reversed his grip again on the sword again, his lips curling into a smile. Yahiko ran at him, passing him when Naruto ducked under his fist and dove forward with his sword out. Yahiko collapsed to the ground, a bright red mark on the back of his kimono. Naruto had hit him with the dull side of his weapon so hard that it had torn his kimono up and left a bright red mark where he'd hit him. Yahiko wasn't dead, he was just in pain.

Nagato rushed him, his fist cocked back ready to knock his head off. Naruto spun around, raised his foot, and nailed Nagato in the chest. He stopped cold and hit the ground hard. But that didn't stop him. He rolled away just as Naruto prepared to drive the katana into his skull. As he got to his feet, he looked back at Yahiko as he slowly

began to get up before falling back down. The pain must have been severe for him to not be able to get up.

"You have courage, I'll give you that," Naruto told him. Nagato gave him a glare while Yahiko turned his head to do the same. "But you lack something that all warriors must have. Or maybe you do have it, but you just haven't shown it to us yet." Nagato ran at him. "Let me see your courage!" Nagato threw a fist at him. Naruto kicked it away and continued with the motion to deliver a roundhouse kick to the side of his head. Nagato rolled along the ground and jumped to his feet. He ran back at him. Naruto jumped back as he began a series of kicks and punches. He blocked or dodged all of them before grabbing his ankle when he threw another one. Naruto grinned but his grin soon faded as Nagato jumped up to kick him in the face with the other one. Naruto barely had to evade it. When Nagato's back hit the ground he cursed and was thrown by Naruto into the far wall. He slumped over, a thin line of blood coming down his nose and dripping onto the floor.

Naruto felt a tug on the back of his uniform and cursed inwardly. Yahiko was back up. Naruto grinned as his shirt began to glow. Yahiko's eyes widened as he jumped back as his shirt was flashed burned away, leaving nothing damaged on Naruto. Underneath his kimono was the chest part of his second armor that had been designed by Xedrael. Its two rods on the back glowed with energy as they ignited into long blades. Yahiko was about to protest to how unfair that was, but when he thought about it, Jiraiya had taught them that in the shinobi world there were no rules to combat.

Naruto gripped another one that was at his side and ignited it. Holding two swords, one being a katana and the other a pure energy blade made him quiver with fear. The katana he could deal with, but an actually energy sword like that, he doubted he could stop it the same way he could the katana. At least the katana's energy blade didn't run from tip to tip. Meaning he could grab it from the back or not and stop it. Nagato had been lucky when he got stabbed. Naruto hadn't activated it so he didn't have his blood vaporized right then and there.

Yahiko lowered his body down as he rushed Naruto. Naruto smiled. Naruto swung the katana first. Yahiko rose up, jumping soon after, and landed down behind Naruto. He reached for his neck, hoping to strangle him. Naruto spun on his heels, his blades on his backs nearly cutting Yahiko's arm off had he not pulled it back and spun to kick him in the face. Naruto grabbed his ankle before this could happen though and kicked in him in the back of the knee to send him to the ground.

Rtas lunged forward, one arm back and the other arm out front. He grabbed Zabuzza by the face, picked him up, and hurled him into the ground before kicking him in the gut. The force of the blow sent him skidding into a downed Mikoto that lay crumpled on the floor. Zabuzza tried to get up, but found his body too heavy to move. He was tired. He hadn't fought someone this tough in years. He had fought much at all really. The little missions were simple missions, this was different though.

Rtas placed a hoof on his back to slowly apply pressure on him to keep him down. "You are a mighty warrior, but not by my standards," Rtas grabbed him back the back of his kimono, pulling him up to eye

level. He snorted at the words written on the back of his kimono. "Demon of the mist," he read with a snort. "You have no right to call yourself anything like that." He tossed him into the wall headfirst and watched as he crumpled to the ground.

Rtas shook his head, disappointed by the fight. He quickly turned to see how Naruto was doing. Naruto was doing just as well. He was keeping them on the ground, but no matter how many times they were knocked down they just got back up. It was clear that they were far more determined to win. _But how far are they willing to go to win,_ he thought with narrowed eyes.

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Blood and copper filled his taste buds again. That's all he could taste, and it annoyed him. He could feel the crackle of electricity run up his spine as his energy shields recharged. He dropped to a knee from the pain and odd taste in his mouth. _**"I have defied Gods and Demons!" **_The voice told him. His visors' defogging system kicked in, breaking up the blood that was crusted to his visor as he got back to his feet, running as quickly as he could to catch up to the others. Sasuke was beside him, making certain that he'd be okay.

John knew that Hanabi was directly behind him. For a really young Spartan, she sure did kick a lot of ass when it came to take out Phantoms with odd weapons. She'd somehow managed to steal a few SPKNr Launchers and wail on the Phantoms' belly, gutting it in a few shots, killing the remaining Drones that were inside before they could fly out of the ship. When it blew up, it gave them a chance to mow down the remaining Drones that could only stare in utter shock at their destroyed ship. John had taken a beating from this however, and had needed a moment to let his shields recharge.

Now that his shields were recharged, the bad taste out of his mouth and a clear line of sight on a group of Mongooses with drivers and men and women riding in the back with SPKNr Launchers. One of them had no driver, and John took it as someone yelled out, "Mount up! Rockets in back," as they drove through the large metal doors. "We need to move fast and punch hard!" The same person stated. John floored it into the valley below where a battle was taking place. He knew the other Spartans wanted to fight, but with few vehicles, he couldn't just order the men to get up so they could tag along. They were designed for stealth, not for this.

That didn't stop Sasuke or Neji though. Their teams made a break for the complex where Marines fought tooth and nail with every kind of weapon under the sun in an attempt to push back the Covenant forces. Sasuke and Neji ran neck and neck, their legs pumping as hard as they could before they spied their targets. Neji jumped onto the front of a Brute Chopper while Sasuke jumped onto the back of a Ghost. In one move, the rides were theirs and the enemies were gone beneath the vehicles. John, however, saw this, and slowly began to wonder if this was what he was like without knowing it. Did they wanna win the same as him? Did they wanna win everything like it was a game?

John snapped back to reality as a plume of smoke washed over him, his rocket man blowing up the first Anti-Air Wraith they crossed. He floored it over the concrete ramps, the engine still crying in protest to his massive weight. It cried louder when they touched the

ground. They bounced once, popped a wheelie, corrected, and then bounced one more time when the earth behind them flashed into nothing but searing heat. The rocket man wasn't firing. John looked over his shoulder. He was dead. The heat had melded his flesh to the metal bars.

John forced the mongoose into a hard U-turn, stopping him from progressing any further. As he looked to see what was around him, a Brute Chopper exploded in front of him; its twisted cherry metal pinging off his armor and shields. The cloud of smoke was blown away by Sasuke as he came through with his Ghost. John spun around, grabbing the SPKNr Launcher from the dead Marines' grasp. John jumped onto the wing of the Ghost, riding shotgun as a few Marines might call it. He raised the RPG and fired twice. Two vapor trails of liquid propellant streaked across the battlefield. Two flowers appeared from the second AA Wraith as it exploded from the combined force of the blasts.

Plasma fire melted and glassed the earth in front of them. John could feel the heat as they drove through it. His shields drained to a quarter-charge, his skin grew heat blisters that popped, scabbed, and then began bleeding all over again. He looked up. Two Phantoms were overhead, one making a break for the right entrance and the other heading for the other. Missiles slammed into the Anti-Gravity generators on both of them from two Missile Pods at the ramps. John could just barely make out the images of Haku and Hanabi on both of them. Both Phantoms quickly ascended into the skies to get away, but it was too late. They had already taken too much damage, and both quickly exploded as they began plummeting back to earth.

Two more appeared but were also quickly dispatched thanks to a few helping Hornets and the Missile Pods. "Both AA Wraiths have been neutralized," _Johnson informed them. The screeching sound of metal on metal sounded above them, shaking the complex as it got louder. "Standby. Something big closing in on your location," _Johnson told them. The sound got louder, the building shook a bit more, and the Marines all began looking around with panic in their eyes. John ran up to where the other Spartans were. Sasuke and Neji joined them on the ramps.

"What's that sound?!" Hidan asked fearfully.

"_SCARAB! Find some cover! NOW!" _The Spartans didn't need to even be ordered to do that. A Scarab could level them without firing on them. It could just step on them if it wanted to. John wasn't about to rush out into the open with it above them anyways. The Marines in Mongooses began scattering for cover or to just throw its aim off as it came crashing down in front of the ramps with its ass to them. Rocket fire filled his vision as plumes of smoke from the vapor trails slammed into random sections of the Scarab.

"â€|its joints! Target its joints!" John shouted as he ran down at it. Sasuke and Neji followed. This wouldn't be as easy as the last one they dealt with. John jumped onto the Ghost while Neji jumped on his Chopper. Sasuke cursed inwardly at not having a riding. This would make things a bit harder.

Missile fire slammed into the joints of the Scarab, forcing it to turn and face the threat. It built up a charge on its flower petal cannon and quickly fired it. A stream of bright green energy soared

across the battlefield and slammed into the ramps. Molten metal flew into the air, showering the Marines and Spartans with cherry red metal drops that acted like rain. Marines screamed in pain as the hot metal struck their bare flesh while the Spartans stood tall and strong, firing on the massive walking tank.

John threw a grenade up at it the flower face it had, getting its attention and splitting up its energy weapon into two different paths when the lens that focused the energy into a straight shot became cracked. This threw the pilots for a loop, forcing them to think on how to use the _new _weapon. It wasn't easy for the simpleminded beasts to come up with a way to use it. Instead they just started shooting at their enemies. This saved a lot of lives. With a split shot, they never hit anyone other than the side of the cliff they were on.

Neji and John combined fire when the thing suddenly started to lean towards the left. The front left leg was breaking apart. It took a few staggering steps before falling down on its belly, its weapon still firing at anything that moved. John felt a wave of heat rush over him, his shields instantly draining fully. It wasn't even a direct hit. It had been two meters above him. The searing heat had damaged his shields. He cursed. His body wasn't moving anymore. He collapsed to the ground, his body hurting from the electrical sparks that went down his spine.

His energy shields slowly recharged and his suit soon began to function again. He quickly jumped back to his feet and jumped to his side to dodge anything that that might be getting ready to fire at him. When nothing flew at him, he jumped back on the Ghost and floored it towards the downed Scarab. Plasma fire rained down on it before it quickly stopped by a shadow on the top of it. Sasuke was on top of the thing, his shotgun mowing down the enemy on top of it. A blur was beside him, blasting the enemy away with a battle rifle in hand. It was Neji.

"Hit the reactor!" John ordered. Both gave him green lights as they vanished from his sight. John pushed on the controls, boosting straight towards the back of the walking tank. It was a pain taking twenty seconds before the two jumped down behind his vehicle. They quickly jumped on the wings of the unit as John began driving it up to the ramps. Liquid metal dripped down from the joints before the legs fell off, then the cannon and then the middle of it. A flash of thunder and light sounded from it. When the blinding light faded nothing but a smoking crater of glass remained. The Scarab tank was gone.

"_Well done, Chief," _Miranda told him. "_I'm sending in a few Pelicans." _

"_One more target, Chief. The Covenant AA Gun in the next area: Take it down and Lord Hood can start his attack run." _Johnson informed him.

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Pain was all he could feel at the moment. Just screaming, burning, aching pain that ran through his entire body as he lay on the ground staring up at the ceiling. He wasn't the only one that hurt. Yahiko was beside him in the same condition. Covered with cuts and burns and

a single black, he looked just about as bad as he felt. Nagato couldn't blame him for not wanting to get up. But they had to get up. Their friend, a family member, and the third part of the group, life was on the line. They had to save Konan. If they didn't, they could never live with themselves for letting her down. He didn't want to be the reason she died. He would win. He would win no matter what.

Struggling, he slowly got to his feet, his bleeding form screaming in protest as he got back up. Naruto stood before him, his eyes narrowed on him in curiosity. Rtas had long since been left alone. Naruto had called him off, claiming that he could deal with them. Rtas had agreed, but Nagato had the feeling that it was for a different reason. Zabuza had long since gotten up, his bleeding form hurting him so bad he had to struggle to move. Mikoto was no better. She hissed in pain with each step and breath she took.

Naruto snorted at them. "I've been through these kinds of drills since I first joined the Sangheili. I live and breathed this in every day I was with them. I was hated and viewed as nothing but an incompetent human with no reason to live but to be target practice. But I broke through all of it. I became strong. I broke their training, turning it into my weapon against my trainers. If there is one thing I was taught by all of them it was to understand the person next to me. My team, my ****first ****team, had great warriors that held more power than my instructors because of their birth heritage. I didn't hate them for it. I just used it to my advantage. We became a unit like no other. In the time we spent together we became none as many things, but among all the names we were called, there was always one that I liked. We were called "Mad Fox" because of me. My anger drove me to destroy my enemies in ways that only Lekgolo or the strongest Sangheili could do. But we were not always united. In fact we were divided when we first came together. Do you understand what I'm getting at?"

Nagato spit out some blood. He glared at Naruto as he ran his arm over his bleeding mouth. "Not really."

Naruto's, eyes lowered in pain as he continued to speak. "My first team was made up of people that had trained with me and fought with me at all times of our training. Varo, Toro, and Loki, were all proud warriors that I served with. We were a team. Before we became a team, we hated each other. Varo was strong but lacked the mental abilities to be a team leader. He used his strength to boss us around at all time. Toro was quick but had no real physical strength like most Sangheili warriors had. He loved to boast about his speed to all of us. Loki was brilliant for his age but he wasn't as fast as us. He used his mental strengths to set us up for traps when we were all training. I was just average by their standards. I remember Xedrael telling me about a bet that most of the high ranking Sangheili had made when I was first placed on the team. They thought I would be the first to die." Naruto chuckled sadly. "It was funny, but I remember that Varo became my first real friend. I showed him my past and then he accepted me, understanding that my pain was far greater than his own. Next was Toro, but I gained his friendship by beating him in a race. When he was beaten, he gave me his word on the blood of his lineage that we would be forever friends. The last was Loki. He was the hardest to gain acceptance in. I had to beat him at Tototo. When I beat him it was while he lay dying."

"Interesting story," Yahiko grunted while swinging his captured energy sword. He'd managed to snag one from Naruto a few minutes ago.

Naruto effortlessly blocked it, his eyes still on the ground. "When Loki died I felt like it was my fault. I always felt that way when a friend died. That's why I've always tried to keep them out of harms' way. I don't want to lose anyone else. I would give my life for them, and that's why I fight for the Sangheili. They raised me, trained me, accepted me, and in the end, became the family I was robbed of because of the fox. My team was robbed from me early in our carrier in the military. We were never a team until Loki died, and that's when I began to understand what it meant to be a team. We put our differences aside and became one. We became heroes in the eyes of those younger than us. Do you know what a hero even is? What is a hero? And what is a team? Are they the same? Or are they different?"

Naruto kicked Yahiko out of the way. Mikoto rushed forward, her fist cocked back ready to knock Naruto on the ground. Naruto raised his free hand, stopping her blow with an open palm. She grunted and hissed as her body protested to this. Naruto pulled her towards him and then kicked her in the chest, sending her crashing back into Zabuzza. "Why?" Mikoto coughed up some blood. Her vision was fuzzy. "Why do you care what a team or hero is? What's the point in this? What's the point in this story?"

Naruto looked up at them, his eyes a flicker with a look as though he was looking into the past. "I suppose there's no point. But I wanna know your answer. What is the definition of a hero and team?"

Nagato blinked. "A team is a group of people that work together to complete missions. A hero is..." Nagato looked away. "I don't know what a hero is."

Naruto closed his eyes. Konan's time was almost up. "Yes. A team is a group of people that work together to complete missions. We never worked together until Loki's death. When he died we began working together. We earned our names. I earned the name "God of Death" by becoming a killer than only tasted victory. No one could kill like I could. I used the very power that had caused my life to be distorted and taken away from me to destroy my enemies. I became a hero in doing this. Tell me: Why would I be viewed as a hero for committing such things?" They were silent. Naruto had a sad smile. "I once thought of ending my life while I lived in the village. I didn't do it because I didn't have what I have now. And you know what, I'm happy I never did. But I can tell you right now, that even though we may not like each other, I do understand why you could hate me."

Yahiko stood up, his single crimson robotic eye burning brightly as he glared at Naruto. "I can't say I hate you, but I don't like you for putting Konan's life at stake. Why would you even be our friend in the first place only to do this?! What's the point in this speech, this fight, and using Konan as a way to make us fight you? Why make us fight you when we're a team?"

"Have we actually worked together?" Naruto asked. Yahiko fell silent. In truth they hadn't even worked together as a complete team. Dividing them up was one thing, but for Naruto, teamwork meant

sticking by them, shooting and slicing up an enemy together. What they had been doing wasn't teamwork. It was playing a hero. They weren't heroes, not yet anyways. Naruto smiled. "We have never worked together. I know we will though. I have faith in us all." They looked at each other, wondering if this meant it was over. "But—" Konan cringed as Naruto nodded to Rtas. He drew his energy sword. "You have run out of time. Konan will die for your inability to save her. You all failed."

Yahiko moved without thinking. He had to save her. Nagato was beside him. Rtas swung his sword. Nagato blocked it with his stolen sword, but was forced back. Yahiko managed to block Rtas's half strength swing. Konan gasped when she felt no pain. Looking back, she saw Yahiko blocking Rtas's sword.

"I won't let you kill her!" Naruto grinned as Yahiko spoke. "She and Nagato are the only family I have left. I won't let you kill her!" Rtas reached forward, grabbing him by his head. Yahiko bit him, but it did nothing but annoy him. With a single flick of the wrist, Yahiko was at the other end of the training hall. He looked up, his hands balled into fist as he jumped up to charge Rtas. Zabuza blocked the next blow with Mikoto trying to kick Rtas. He dodged her kick, grabbed her ankle, and tossed her away without so much as blinking. Yahiko rushed him with Nagato, both ready to beat Rtas in the ground.

_A hero, _Naruto thought, _is a person that shows incredible strength when it's needed the most. _The Spartans and Marines all rushed the AA Gun. The cry of the Marines and Spartans overwhelmed the scream of Grunts, Jackals and Brutes as they all barked and screamed in their language while firing at them. Bodies hit the ground. Magazines and spike clips were tossed away. Grenades flew through the sky and detonated, throwing broken and burned bodies around like rag dolls. John, Sasuke, and Neji were at the front of the line, their assault rifles tearing the enemy apart like a hot knife through butter. Tenten remained behind with Hanabi and Haku, firing their sniper rifles into the heads of Brutes, shooting grenades out of the sky, and saving Marines from being eaten by the carnivores Grunts when they lost their masks. _A hero is a person that is looked up to by those weaker than him, and helps those less fortunate. _Konohamaru pulled wounded soldiers off the field, putting them behind rocks and boulders with Marines doing the same. _But what really defines a hero isn't his strength, his speed, his brilliance, or his actions. _John, Sasuke, and Neji took cover as Brutes with brute shots fire at them from the high ground underneath the massive AA Gun. Zabuza blocked Rtas's sword once more. Mikoto wrapped her arms around Rtas's waist. Nagato jumped from Rtas's hoof to his knee, and kicked him in the side of the head. He staggered back, his balance lost for a moment. Yahiko got behind him, lowered down, and the three kicked Rtas in the chest, sending him falling over Yahiko. The Brutes all lay dead before the trio of Spartans. John lobbed a few plasma grenades with Neji and Sasuke into the core of the gun as it opened up to release the intense heat inside it. _What defines a hero is their ability to never give up— no matter what. _

Rtas looked up, finding the energy weapons in their hands, his own missing. _It worked just like you said it would. All they needed was a proper motive. You were the right choice in the end, _Rtas chuckled to himself which soon turned into a laugh. Naruto laughed as well, along with Konan. They quickly turned around, their weapons pointed

at Naruto as he released Konan.

"You have proven yourself to us," Naruto told them. They all looked at each other for a moment before breathing a sigh of relief. Naruto let them smile. Things weren't going to get any easier from this point on. As soon as they exited Slipspace, they'd be back in the fight. They'd have a chance to regain their lost honor. Naruto found it funny that he had even used that as a way to make them fight. He, of all people, never liked fighting for honor. He didn't care if he was disgraced or not. All he cared about was making sure everyone got home alive and in one piece.

Konan shook her head. As the others leaned over to catch their breaths, she leaned over to whisper, "And you doubted that I knew my friends like I said I did," into his ear. Naruto smiled. Using her as a reason to make them fight had been her idea, not his or Rtas's. She told them what to do to make Yahiko and Nagato made. She even told them how they would react and fight. Naruto smiled to himself. He could see a lot of his former team in them all.

_I will make sure you all survive though. I won't fail you guys like I failed them. _"Alright, you all need to get patched up before we drop out of Slipspace. As soon as we do, we're back in the fight. And if you curious, a hero is someone that has guts and never gives up, which is what you all just did. Rtas was only fighting at a third of his fighting potential. In terms of prowess, stamina, and intellect, Rtas is only second to Thel. Both of them helped train me. I can honestly say however, that you did far better than my first team. It took us three weeks just to do what you did. And you did it with motivation, teamwork, and guts. You should be honored to know that."

"Do you think that we can forgive you for putting Konan in danger though?" Nagato growled out. Naruto raised a single brow. Something clicked with Nagato, along with the others right then. "You weren't in danger were you?" Konan blushed while shaking her head as she fought to keep from laughing as Yahiko and Nagato's faces fell. "I'm going to kill you." Nagato stated a second later. She broke out laughing. Rtas and Naruto walked out, letting them have their moment.

"We haven't much time."

"I know. But let them have their fun. We're not part of the Covenant, and if they join me on Sangheliosâ€¦ I want them to be happy."

"That speech though. Why did you use your former team? You were never the sentimental type while we trained you and your team? Why now?"

Naruto put his arms behind his head. "I suppose there are just some things that can't be explained in words alone, Rtas. By the way, why'd you let them push you down like that? Getting old?" Rtas growled at him for that. Naruto laughed. "We tried that three times. And each time we ended up on the ground."

"Like you said: To let them have a moment." The two walked in silence from that point on.

(-)

John walked up to Thel, his rifle on his shoulder as the turret exploded into chunks of molten and twisted metal. The other Spartans stood beside them, all of them watching as the Dreadnought's protective fleet began to climb higher into the air. John brought his rifle down into his hand, gripping it tightly just as the roar of dozens of Longswords flew over them, all of them hitting the tripod ship with everything they had. Three Frigates flew in behind them, their MAC guns firing rounds straight at the thing. For a moment the tripod ship was covered in flames and smoke. It seemed like they had won. The ground rocked, and long pieces of metal rose up from the ground as the Dreadnought appeared, sinking into the hole that appeared beneath it. White energy swirled around the ground and ship as it prepared to fire something. The air speed became zero instantly. The ships all dipped down just as the built up charge of energy exploded into the sky. The wind picked back up again and threw the team of Spartans and Thel into the boulders behind them. John cold taste blood and copper again. Darkness hit them all.

"_**Thisâ€¦| is the way the world ends." **_

A few minutes later, John shook his head, clearing the blood from his visor. This was getting old too fast for him. Lord Hood had a coughing fit from the sudden blast as his Frigate, along with the others and Longsword fighters began trying to regain altitude. _"What did Truth just do?! Did he activate the rings?!"_

"_No, sir. But he certainly did somethingâ€¦|" _Miranda answered. John cursed inwardly with the other Spartans as they watched the Dreadnought and Covenant Cruisers fly up into a giant purple and black ball of energy in the sky. The edge of the sphere rippled as the ships flew into it, acting almost like, a Slipspace jump when they were preparing for a jump.

"_Evac wounded and regroup. Wherever Truth went-" _Lord Hood began.

"_Sir! New contact slipping in!" _Someone interrupted over the COM.

John turned to his left, spying a giant white tear just as a burning Covenant Cruiser, came shooting out of it. It was covered in smoke and flames as its engines cut out. It dipped down, flying only a few kilometers above them before smacking down into the ground behind the factory. John's eyes were wide at the sight of it. There was no denying what he saw falling from the burning ship pieces that had impacted into the ground.

"What is it?! More Jiralhanaes?" Thel asked.

John shook his head. "Worse."

21. Chapter 21

Chapter 21

Sparks zipped across her field of vision. The lab shook so hard that parts of the floor above came down. The glass windows shattered from

the rumbling. Computers, medical equipment, and pieces of weird rock, metal, and glowing energy sources all fell to the ground. Hinata fell to the ground, her first instincts telling her to get in door frame. She pushed this away as something covered her up, protecting her from the falling chunks of concrete that fell from the next floor. Hinata blinked the dust away from her eyes when the dust stopped falling and looked back to see Xedrael over her, a few chunks of stone and wood resting on his back. He was okay.

He slowly got off of her, looking up to make sure nothing else was going to fall on his son's mate. Hinata brushed off the specks of dust as she looked around the lab they were in. A slightly older woman with glasses, red hair, and a white lab coat was getting to her feet. Her name was Karin, and she, like Hinata, had also been trained by Doctor Anders. Karin was a wild girl at heart, but favored science over everything else. She had changed her hair color so many times now that Hinata no longer remembered what the original color was. But she had respect for her skills anyway. That was why Anders had asked for Karin to help them out, along with Ino Yamanka.

Ino had been offered the chance to be a Spartan III but she turned it down like Hinata had. Ino wasn't much of a fighter, but she did know how to fight if it was called upon. Ino wasn't trained by Doctor Anders, but she had a certain spark for figuring things out. She was good with coming up with new kinds of upgrades for the Spartans armors, which was why Hinata and Anders wanted her.

Both girls had unique traits that allowed them to help them out. Karin had managed to work with Xedrael and create a new type of shield for the new suits. The shields were reverse engineered from Xedrael's shields. They boosted about the same strength as the MJOLNIR armor did, but they weren't built to endure the type of damage John's could. These suits were designed for speed and stealth. In the hands of the right person they could be used like the MJOLNIR armor, but it would be risky. Ino had been busy working with the HUD, along with energy weapons.

Right now they were in the middle of testing them, making sure they'd be fit to use when Naruto and his Shinobi team got back. They had designed seven alone. That was all they had time for and that was all they could make. They had to use former MJOLNIR armor parts to make it work, refit them with Sangheili armor designs from Naruto's former armor, refit them with better shields since his no longer worked, and refit them with a wide array of weapons. It wasn't easy, but they had almost got it.

"Is everyone okay?" Hinata asked.

"I'm still alive," Ino whispered. She unconsciously reached for her burned leg from the attack on her homeworld. The damage had been healed, but the pain never really seemed to leave. She had been left somewhat crippled by the burn she had gotten, and to this day it still hurt her.

"I'm alive, but I think I hit my head. Am I bleeding?" Karin was holding a hand to her head as she walked around the room in a daze.

"How could we tell when you're hair is red, Karin?" Anders asked as she got up, her eyes blinking away the dust. She shook her head once

before reaching for her laptop. She flipped it open, connected a sandwich of crystals and cabals that ran from the computer to the center suit of armor. It was inside a protection pod, normally designed for keeping test subjects or bad prisoners in without letting them out. With the war going on, several key places had been hit, and they'd been forced to use the old weapons complex to work on the suits.

Hinata went to her computer as well, dusting off the small chunks of stone that lay on the keyboard. Ino and Karin did the same thing. "Alright, begin testing phase one." Hinata ordered. They all typed in a line of code so fast that Xedrael thought he heard gunfire. As he watched Naruto's mate type on the keyboard, the hum of energy shields recharging forced him to look up at the center pod. The object inside was covered in a two inch thick layer of white energy that protected the suit from damage.

Xedrael really couldn't help but wonder how the humans had actually come up with these shields in the first place. Reverse engineering wasn't unheard of in the Covenant. The San'Shyuum and Huragok did the same thing to all Forerunner technology that they found. They reverse engineered them into stronger weapons or stronger shields. They made their fighters a lot faster or stronger. They had even put them to use in everyday life back on High Charity. So why had the humans only given these shields to their Demons?

He shoved the thought away. He was more worried about what was going on outside. Tsume had taken her suit out to check things out. She had asked that her suit be tested first so she could go be lookout. Hinata had agreed to this with a slight frown. But now he was seeing the brilliance of her idea. They didn't know what was going on outside. They had a few Marines come in every now and then to check on them, mostly just to check and make sure the girls were still alive. But that had been yesterday. They hadn't seen nor heard from them since then.

The white light faded and the pod went dark inside.

"Okay, shields are working at eighty-three percent." Hinata informed them. "We need to test the energy weapons next. Beginning testing phase two." She ordered. Once again they typed a line of code so fast that Xedrael could have sworn he heard gunfire. They stopped typing, but the sound of gunfire still sounded. Hinata blinked as the monitor told her the progress of the suits' weapons. "Is thatâ€¦?"

The radio in the center of the room hissed and crackled before Tsume's voice came over the radio. _"That ship that just crashed has those Demons crawling all over it!" _Xedrael blinked, not understanding why the Spartans would be all of it right now after it just hit. _"I mean the Flood, my bad." _That made a lot more sense. _"The Flood is moving this way. We need to hurry. The Marine beside me said that the Spartans are heading towards the crash site to blow it up." _

Hinata felt her stomach twist into a knot. They couldn't transport the suits to a ship to get them to safety. They didn't weight anything like the MJOLNIR armor, but they were close to the weight of the SPI armor that the Spartan IIIs wore. Plus she couldn't abandon the suits after everything they put into them. All the hours would seem like nothing but a waste with nothing gained or earned. She wanted these

to be used by Naruto and his team as a way of saying thank you for everything they were doing and everything they had done. But she wanted Naruto to use his because of how he had saved her life.

The building shook again. There was a growl that sounded from outside the main doors. Gunfire erupted again from the other side, along with screaming. The doors busted open, two ODSs running in with a few others still firing their assault rifles and battle rifles at something in the distance. When the last one entered, they shut the doors, slamming a chair underneath the old fashion door knobs to make sure nothing got in.

"What's going on?" Karin asked. For someone that was rather wild, she sure did have a good self preservation instinct. Her mind told her to run but she had to know what was going on first before she jumped out and started running.

The ODS that had entered last looked her over. She read his name tag. Kimimaro Kaguya. "Those strange creatures are at the door." He told them. ODSs were brave, maybe even a little crazy, but even they had limits to their craziness. Going up against something like the Flood would be okay, but when faced with high numbers, not even they were that crazy. This caused Karin to curse. The one way in was through the door that he just bolted up.

"So what do we do," Anders asked. "We can't simply wait for help to arrive."

"I'm afraid, Ma'am, with all the little bastards running around at the door right now, we have no choice but to hold out until help arrives." Kimimaro replied with a shake of his head. ODSs never backed down unless they had no choice. Obviously if they didn't have to protect them they'd have stayed outside to fight until the bitter end. Of course that was how all ODSs were. The sound of screaming and moaning grew louder as something banged on the door. Dust fell from the ceiling, alerting the team to the hole in the roof. A blur of black and white dropped down into their midst.

(-)

John couldn't believe it. The Flood had gotten to Earth. It seemed like everything that was a threat to them just knew the location of Earth. Was God conspiring against them or something? He had to be if everything he'd been fighting now knew the location of Earth. First the Covenant found the location of Earth and now the Flood knew where it was? Seriously, what the hell was going on?

"_The Flood," _Miranda's voice nearly screamed over the radio speakers in his helmet. _"It's spreading all over the city!" _

"_How do we contain it," _Lord Hood asked. John knew **that **was a stupid question. You couldn't contain something like them.

"_Find the crashed Flood Ship. Overload its engine core. We either destroy this city, or risk losing the entire planet."

>

"_Do it." _

"_Chief, make your way to the crash site." _

Master Chief pulled his assault rifle off his back, growling in annoyance at another fight. The other Spartans felt the same way, but they didn't complain about the new mission. This was what they were trained for. They would manage another fight.

Thel closed his eyes, offering up a silent prayer for his people that had probably fought and died against the ship before following the Spartans as they ran back down the hill, passing over the fallen Marines that either died during the fire fight or were still unconscious because of the blast of wind that threw them all to the ground. Konohamaru passed a few of them, shaking them as he did to wake them. Those that did wake went back to sleep almost instantly while a few managed to get back up. Thel brought up the rear through all of this, watching as Konohamaru showed respect for the fallen and the sleeping. He didn't really question it. He knew humans and Sangheili were totally different.

There was some chatter over the radios, but it was too garbled for them to understand. The crashed ship must have been interfering with their close range radios. As they got close to the metal walkways of the complex, a shadow jumped over them and landed on the building adjacent to it. John and Neji raised their rifles, searching for the target. They couldn't see it anymore. John knew it was an infected soldier, but as to what he didn't know. He was just hoping it was an Infected Hunter. Those were strong as hell.

They ran back down the concrete path, running around the small carts and wagons, passing over the bodies of Brutes, Grunts, Marines, and workers. As they rounded a corner, they caught a glimpse of another shadow passing overhead. Just as they raised their weapons up at it, hundreds of the little Flood came down on a squad of Marines with Infected Brutes and Humans backing them up. The Marines opened fire, but it was already too late. They were quickly consumed by the Flood, infected before their eyes.

The Spartans were the first to open fire on them, killing the little "Popcorn Flood" as Konohamaru seemed to call them. The bigger ones were taken down by Thel as he shot each spore, destroying the controller for the Infected Soldier. As the bodies dropped, more of the little things showed up, repossessing the bodies until they were totally destroyed or shot up so badly they just couldn't move. When the area was clear, John pushed forward, running through the metal and glass building that overlooked the ramp.

A single Marine stood at the door shaking in fear as one a herd of them jumped up to take him over. Sasuke opened fire, killing each other little Flood Spores before they could take him over. The man fell back, shaking his fear until he saw his rescuer. When he saw the Spartans, he jumped to his feet, raised his rifle, and quickly joined them in dealing with the threat. The warehouse that they had once crossed through, leaving hundreds of bodies lying on the ground for a cleanup crew to get was being infected by them. It didn't look pretty, especially for the Marines that were holed up in the corner fighting off their infected comrades.

They jumped out the broken window, rifles up and punching rounds into targets as they fell. Thel remained at the window, sniping out targets with his carbine. John and Hanabi began running towards the pinned down Marines, firing into the backs of the Infected Brutes

that were stalking towards them. Neji and Sasuke were running towards the crates to help a down Marine that they quickly recognized as Tayuya. The Flood that was trying to get her was being held at arm's length as she fought to keep it off. Sasuke ran straight at her and kicked it away. She lowered her arms down to the ground, looked up at him as he began firing on the onrushing enemies, and quickly jumped back to her feet, shooting the rushing Flood with her pistol. Tenten and Konohamaru laid down suppressing fire, which was actually not working like the name would make it sound. The Flood just ran into the bullets, dropping like flies as they butchered them with bullets, turning them into rotting swish cheese.

The Marines thanked John for saving them. He read their name tags. Hidan and Tobi. Both were holding assault rifles with two different expressions. Hidan had a crazed look in his eyes, like he was ready to kill some more. Tobi looked scared out of his mind. He was fidgeting with his gun as he tried to reload it while muttering, "Tobi is a good boy. Tobi doesn't want to die," over and over again. John patted him on the shoulder, a Spartan way of speaking without words. Tobi must have gotten the message because he quickly began to calm down and managed to reload his gun.

The team regrouped, firing on the onrushing Flood that swarmed them. "This isn't going so well!" Tayuya stated as she reloaded her gun.

"Noticed," Hidan replied.

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Naruto climbed into the Phantom with his team behind him. They were all going down this time. There would be no mistakes this time either. They had all been healed up by the Huragok and were now ready to drop in for a fight. Since they were dealing with the Flood, Naruto had ordered them to take plasma rifles and lots of plasma grenades. They were allowed to take their other weapons, but Naruto was persistent in letting them only take plasma rifles.

He quickly moved up to where the pilot was, finding Ahriel in the pilot's seat. "Soã€| you think the Demons are still alive?" Naruto asked calmly. Ahriel blinked and then laughed. Naruto laughed as well. "Forget I asked you that."

"I believe I shall," he replied happily.

Naruto shook his head as he walked back to his team. Their mission was to save his mate, first and foremost. After saving his first mate, they would link back up with the first strike team that would be launched from the pods and head to destroy the ship while taking whatever was inside it. Naruto believed the device to have been the AI Cortana since he had heard the voice speak throughout the entire time he was with the Demons; he figured it was what was in the device. Now all they had to do was rescue his mate, link up with the team, and then go burn the Flood until there was nothing left to burn. Naruto was all for this part of the mission.

"Out of curiosity," Rauk began, his eyes closed as he spoke. "Did you teach them how to use our weapons?" Naruto blinked once before shaking his head. Rauk and Haer instantly winced. "I suppose we need to make sure to stay _behind _them so ****we****__don't get shot, right?"

Naruto nodded again. _Greatâ€|_

"In Naruto's defense; we didn't have a lot of time to train with them," Yahiko told him.

_Time that you all spent mating with one another, _Haer thought.

"_Bare Humans and take heed," _Rtas's voice echoed over the speakers as he made a call to all of Earths occupants. _"This is the carrier, _Shadow of Intent. _Clear this sector while we deal with the Flood." _He ordered. Pods were launched from the ship onto locations that were overpopulated with the Flood. The Hanger doors opened up, dropping the shields in that area long enough for the Phantoms to depart. Naruto took in a deep breath as Rtas opened a channel to them. _"Be careful, Uzumaki. We know not how bad the damage is or the safety of your mate. If she is infectedâ€|"_

"I will do what I must, Rtas. There is no need to worry," Naruto cut the channel before Rtas could speak again. _She's alive and well. That is all I will believe in for now. _

(-)

John blinked in astonishment. The Elites were here to help combat the Flood? Maybe the Elites weren't so bad anymore? He glanced over at Thel as he watched his brethren fight against the Flood. It must have pained him to know that they had to come here and fight them now. For the Marines and other Spartans, this was more than they could imagine. The Covenant had been bad enough, but the Floodâ€| they weren't so certain they could deal with them.

John pushed down the broken and turned up metal grate towards the fighting. He'd have to save them as well in order to protect Earth. The others were quick to follow, Thel taking point while John brought up the rear as the team all settled into a simple line. The Marines were in the back which was why John was behind them. He would let none of them be turned by the parasite. He'd kill them if he had to.

By the time they got down to the Elites, the fighting was over, and Thel conversed with one in red armor. "My brothers, I fear you bring bad news," Thel looked down at the single dead Sangheili. He was young and brave. He knew not his name, but he would make certain his family knew he died protecting something important to them now.

"High Charity has fallen and became a private hive," Chichi replied.

"And the fleet? Has quarantine been broken?"

"A single ship broke through our line and we gave chase."

"But we had a fleet of hundreds!"

"Alas brotherâ€| the Floodâ€| it has evolved."

John's helmet managed to translate all of it. The only thing that worried him was High Charity. If it was a private hive nowâ€| he

dared not even think what it would do to Earth if it came this way. The fleet that Thel spoke of did seem be somewhat refreshing considering that even though they'd taken out hundreds maybe even thousands of Covenant ships, that they still had hundreds more. They might be able to use that to take down the rest of the Covenant if they could all gather them to strike back at Truth.

There was a rumble from the hill that he'd come down the first time using a Mongoose and he tensed. It was the Flood. They were heading this way. They had five Elites, not including Thel, three Marines, and an army of Spartans. Army wasn't the real word he'd use, but five or six was considered an army in his book. Just one could take down almost anything if you gave them enough resources and time to think up a tactical solution to the problem at hand. But he had six not including himself and six Elites when you count Thel. They could take anything probably.

Thel gave a low bark to the Elites while John motioned towards the hill. It was clear that they were both going to take it or die trying. Flood Infected Brutes and Humans appeared, all of them carrying different weapons. The Elites combined fire with Thel to melt and burn the flesh from those closer to them while the Marines and Spartans used their long range weapons to mow down opposing forces in the rear. But no matter how many bodies were destroyed more just kept coming. It seemed like an endless wave of them as they slowly crawled up the ramp, shooting at anything that moved. John knew that at this rate they'd run out of charge and ammo before getting to the top though.

The Elites all pulled out plasma grenades, activating them as they threw them into the faces of Infected Brutes. Flashes of ionized gases and thunder melted them into nothing but heaps of charred flesh. John ordered the Marines to throw grenades at the crates. They threw them, Tobi forgetting to pull the pin on his, and blew the boxes, along with Tobi's inactive grenade, into the bodies hundreds of Flood controlled Brutes. The flying shrapnel tore through the unprotected bodies with ease, cleaving several in half while removing limbs from others.

A force that had once had John worried was now nothing but a pile of rotting flesh. They moved up the hill, policing the wounded with quick bursts to the head. The Elites melted them with plasma weapons to make sure they stayed down. As they got to the top, John looked down at the destruction he'd just caused. Part of him wondered how much longer until they were off of the continent. They needed to deal with them now. They didn't have time to keep fighting them like this.

They all rushed around a corner of stacked crates and came to a halt as hundreds of Infected Brute and Humans turned to greet them down the long corridor of twisted steel and burning metal. One of the Elites spoke, John's helmet translating for him. "Keep count on my kills," it said as it began firing into the horde of enemies. A competition? This would make things a bit more entertaining. Not that this was a competition, but a friendly match wouldn't hurt none.

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Naruto dropped out of the Phantom, his body hunched over from the

fifteen meter fall. The others were down beside him, all of them huffing from the fall as well. It wasn't their fault they had to bail out actually. Some idiot targeted them with a few missiles that took out the Anti-Gravity pods on the Phantom, forcing it into a nosedive on a nearby building. The fall wasn't much of a fall. It was more like a jump or die fall. They decided to jump.

Naruto shook his head, clearing the misty green haze from his vision as he did. The green clouds did little to bother him, but it was still annoying trying to look through it when your eyes hurt from the rush of wind you had to go through during the fall.

He gave simple hand signs to his team, telling them to stay in tight and keep up with him as he jogged to the building where the locator was beeping. All Sangheili armor had locators to them, allowing them to see who was in the area or to help you find them should they get injured and need evac. Most Sangheili requested that theirs' be removed so they could die with honor rather than retreat unless ordered to. Naruto made sure that Xedrael kept his when he left with the others.

He pressed his back against the hard concrete of the buildings' outer wall. He gripped the hilt of his katana tightly before spinning around into the building. He saw nothing. The others rushed in; guns up and ready to shoot at anything. They saw nothing as well. They moved silent and swiftly through the dark floors of the complex, all the while listening for anything out of the ordinary.

A crate moved and Zabuza opened fire on it. The crate burst into flames and then vanished. A single human in a white jacket with dark black hair lay there. Zabuza had killed an innocent person by accident. Naruto hissed at him, forcing him to stow away his weapon. Zabuza quickly did so, not really hesitating in the switch either. Naruto knew this was his fault. He should have trained them to use them rather than beat them into the ground or have sex with Yugito. But he had his priorities at that moment. They had to be dealt with then or someone would have ended up hurt or dead.

The others made sure to keep their plasma rifles down low, hoping not use them as they crossed the dimly lit corridor. Gunfire erupted from another room. Naruto raised his plasma rifle, searching for the target. He couldn't see anything. The gunfire had stopped. Naruto hoped that meant that whatever was on the other side was either dead or had just shot its self to death. He knew that the Flood weren't that stupid.

Naruto motioned for his team to press forward. The signal unit was getting stronger, and Naruto couldn't wait any longer. He had to see them now. He kicked down a door, his plasma rifle up and ready to fire. A man in black stood before him, his battle rifle up in his face. Naruto lowered his weapon. It was the human second Elites: ODS. There were others in the room, a few hurt but okay. In the distance he could see Hinata working on something with a happy Xedrael giving him a nod.

"Glad to know someone came for us," The man muttered. Naruto looked at the name tag. It was Tucker. "Nice to see you again, Foxman. How goes the hunt outside?" Naruto shook his head at his words. The Flood was on Earth. What kind of question was that? Having them on any planet was bad enough. But this was just insane.

"Not well," he muttered while walking up to his mate. Xedrael nodded to his son one last time, glancing back at the pod up against the wall. "We must leave. The parasites are nearing this building and I will not lose you." Hinata waved him off without looking up. Naruto, had he not been in a battle situation, might have allowed this action without words being spoken, but her life was in danger while she worked on the device. Naruto had no time to sit here and watch her play. He grabbed her wrist, jarring her from her work. "We must go. Now!"

"I'm well aware of what's going on outside, but this is important. If we can complete them, you can help the others in fighting them off," she explained. Naruto blinked. What did she mean by that? Rtas was about to start glassing the place to keep the Flood from spreading even further than what they already had. If he didn't move now she'd be dead. When he reached to grab her again, Xedrael grabbed his wrist, his head shaking slowly.

"She has a gift for you and your team," he explained. Naruto narrowed his eyes on his father, unsure of what to think. They still didn't have time for this. But if his father said it was a gift, it would be wrong not to accept it even if the Flood was breathing down their necks.

Hinata continued her work with the others, typing away as fast as she could while the ODSTs and Naruto's team watched their backs. "Power output is stabilizing at ninety percent," she informed the others. "Shield recharging unit is up to seventy percent. Cooling system and bio-algorithms units are working at eighty percent. All systems are in the green. Opening the pods," she typed in a line of code and the pods cracked open. Chilled gasses leaked out through the cracks, momentarily chilling the metal floor.

A growl sounded from dark. "We got company!" Hana yelled.

"The suits are ready. Naruto, we need to get your team geared up before we leave," Hinata informed them as the pods fully opened, revealing a black and white suit inside each of them. Hinata began typing in another line of code on her computer that opened up a few crates. "ODSTs hold them off with whatever you can use! I'll help them change into their new suits."

"Yes Ma'am," Kimimaro replied, raising his battle rifle. "Cover that doorway and don't let a single fucker through it!" He ordered. They didn't both reply with words. They moved swiftly to the door, their rifles up and ready to kill anything that moved towards them. Naruto admired that much as he stalked towards the center suit.

It was obviously his. It was an inch or two taller than him; black with white lines around the biceps and thighs, biped legs, and bore his title on its back. Black shoulder pads pointed out from its body with small glowing red dots in the center. Its arms and legs both had armguards and shin guards with white rims wrapping around each section of it. The helmet resembled the Sangheili's armor, but still had a new touch to it, bearing two triangles on top with two more pointing up like spikes of hair in between them. A golden visor formed over the face of it with an outline of metal forming around it. This was his and his team had the exact same suits as well.

Hinata ran up to his, pressing a few buttons on the pod as she did. Small arms reached out, grabbing the suit at all of its joints to tear it apart. It broke down to nothing but an empty space with the suit pieces being held in the air. "Get in and strip off your current armor," she ordered. Naruto closed his eyes, his patience nearing its end. He complied nonetheless along with his team. Other females helped them with their suits, giving the commands to the arms that plucked the armor apart. She stopped Naruto from stripping out of his black leather suit he wore underneath it all and motioned for him to enter. He complied. She typed in a few commands and the arms came to life, putting the armor back on in seconds. The last thing it put on was the helmet, but already Naruto felt hot and confined within.

Hinata ran back to her laptop along with the others as they began checking the suits out. It was about that time that gunfire erupted down the hallway and Tsume appeared wearing the same thing. She held one of Naruto's former guns, the broken down sniper rifle he used, and had it broken down to assault mode. She combined fire with the three Sangheili and ODSTs, mowing down the enemy that rushed them. Naruto wanted to move to engage them, protect his mate, but his suit wouldn't allow him to move. He could see Hinata typing furiously on her laptop, sweat trickling down her cheeks as she worked hastily to get the suits to work.

"Hey," Shizune shouted. "I don't suppose you could hurry the hell up, could you?!"

"Working on it," Ino shouted back, annoyance crossing over her features.

Anders pushed back a strand of stray hair as she typed with one hand. Zabuza's suit began to glow, changing from dark black to a glowing white. "Energy shields are working now, but for some reason the suits won't move," she explained. That helped them. They were stuck inside a target for the Flood then. They might as well just wave their hands and scream come get me while they were at it. Anders must have been able to read their minds as she continued typing. "Just hold on, we're almost there."

Karin blinked as she looked down at one of the many screens on her laptop. "The problem is that the suits are locked up on some sort of code word," she gasped out. Hinata snapped her fingers and Karin sighed. "You forget to tell us, didn't you, hussy?"

Hinata ignored Karin as she typed in a few words. The suits blinked and the red lights changed to green. Naruto's HUD went from clear to black and then back to clear with TEAMBIO appearing on the top left, motion tracker on the bottom, and a shield bar appearing at the top. He checked the links to his other teammates and found them in working order. He moved his limbs, making sure they all worked, along with his armored tail before walking out of the pod.

"We can't hold them off much longer!" Isaribi shouted.

"I'm out of ammo!" Dustin cried.

"They'll take it from here now," Hinata smiled as she stepped back. In a flash of black and white, Naruto moved through the ODSTs and cut

down three Infected Brutes with his katana. No more parasites could be seen, so he backed up towards his team. Hinata typed in a few words on a large black metal box that hissed open. Its contents rose up, revealing the same rifles that Tsume had been using. Naruto gave her an odd look that she could have read even without his mask. "Ino was able to recreate your weapons for you. We don't have many of them, so use them wisely." She explained. Naruto took one each, handing them to his human teammates. They were designed for them, not Sangheili.

The former Jinchuuriki smiled as he placed it on the small of his back, resting just above his tail while he clipped his katanas to his belt. The others quickly did the same before nodding to him. "Can we leave now?" He asked kindly. The building shook and part of the wall and floor where the pods had been fell into the darkness below.

"Hell yes!" Ino shouted, clinging to Hana as she watched a crack grow in the floor. More Flood appeared down the corridor. "But how the hell do you plan on getting us out of here?!" A Phantom with a few Marines riding on the edge of it appeared. "I am not jumping," she declared.

Naruto grabbed her by the back of her lab coat. "Good, then I'll just throw you." He proclaimed as he tossed her over the gap. The Marines caught her, grunting with effort as she landed in their arms. Karin was thrown next, followed by Hinata and then Anders. The ODSs agreed to leave the area when they learned that Rtas was going to start glassing the place. Naruto and his team couldn't take the Phantom though. They had to link up with the others so they could get whatever was on the ship off. As the Phantom flew away, Naruto looked back at his team with a determined smile. They could win now. All they had to do was stick together and hope no one shot them in the back. "Let's link up with the other squads so we can take the ship."

Naruto jumped first, dropping twenty-five meters to the ground before the others did. The Sangheili grunted when they landed, but were able to walk it off. A navigational point directed him to the ship. Even without the point it wouldn't be hard to miss a giant ball of fire burning in the distance with enough smoke that it covered the night sky from view.

Naruto gave quick motions to his team, ordering them to run at full sprint in order to get to the target. A few minutes of running had them just two hundred meters away. He picked up radio chatter just as soon as he dropped down beside a few crates. "_Chief," _It was a females' voice, Miranda if he remembered correctly. "_The Elites are looking for something. We didn't believe them when they told us." _She sounded happy, despite the growing threat of the Flood.

"_It's Cortana, Chief," _Naruto recognized that voice as Johnson. "_She's on that ship. Find her! Get her out!" _

Naruto waited for the rest of his team to show up before dropping down to an entrance the building they'd been running across. As soon as he was down, he was quickly turned around by something. He reached out, grabbing it by their arm and twisting it. The hold was broken and reversed, but it didn't call for Naruto to repeat it. It was Thel. He blinked once before looking into the mirrored visor of

Naruto's new suit. The others had been greeted in a similar fashion, but with guns. Their suits had used their energy shields to deflect the projectiles, keeping them safe.

"Uzumaki," Thel question in disbelief. Naruto nodded, patting him on the shoulder. Thel did the same, his mandibles forming what he had always known as a smile. "It is good to see you again, my friend. We must hurry though. I fear the construct on the ship may be in danger." Naruto nodded just as a brute shot round flew between them. Instantly the area was lit up with tracer rounds and plasma fire that melted and punched holes in the idiot Infected Brute. "Let us hurry. We have no time to waste."

Plasma fire, tracer rounds, spikes, crystal shards, and spines flew down on them from the tower ahead of them. They all took cover, John grunting as he took cover behind a crate where Thel was. Sasuke was beside Naruto, a scowl forming on his features at the very idea of being near him. As soon as the projectiles stopping flying, the team spun around, unloading on whatever moved in the distance. The rounds came back, forcing them to take cover again. Naruto, fed up with how things were moving; took a step back, looked up, and hurled a plasma grenade into the air. It fell behind some rocks in the distance and exploded into a flash of light and thunder a moment later.

"You wasted a good grenade," Sasuke remarked.

"I didn't see you coming up with anything," Naruto shot back.

"I'm thinking."

"We'll think faster, Demon." Sasuke gritted his teeth, accepting the dig with a scowl as he looked around the corner of the crate. Once again, he was forced to take cover as enemy fire came screaming at them. Naruto looked over his side as well and suffered the same thing. John and Thel were trying as well and suffering the same thing. This was going to get them nowhere a lot faster. Plasma fell from the sky, raining down white death on the Flood. "Glad I thought of that," Naruto said happily.

"You didn't call for them," Sasuke snapped out, turning around the corner to run at the enemy.

"Stop your squabbling, both of you," Thel commanded. John wasn't sure if Sasuke would listen, but Naruto seemed to get the message instantly.

As the plasma fire stopped coming down they all ran out from the cover, guns up and ready for anything. Dazed looking Infected Humans and Sangheili walked around or limped around with burned off limbs. A few of the larger Flood which he called Brutes, bellowed out in anger, spewing green gasses as they did. They opened fire on them, melting and punching them full of holes as they ran without breaking stride towards the ship.

"_Hurry, Demon," _Chichi shouted over the COM. _"We seek the same prize. But our Shipmaster will sacrifice all to stop the Flood." _Chichi had been taken out of combat when both of his arms were broken by the larger Flood creatures. Thel had ordered it and he accepted it without question.

This got John moving just a bit faster at the thought of losing Cortana now. He blew past waves of Flood without blinking, Neji staying right by his side with Sasuke on the other side. The Spartans were up front, firing onto anything that moved towards them. The Sangheili and Shinobi teams were behind them, covering the rear to make sure nothing got in behind them.

A large Flood with massive arms dropped down between them, splitting the team up. Thel was with the Spartans while Naruto was with the Sangheili and his team. Thel turned to help, but Naruto waved him off, his katana drawn and ready to kill it. Thel didn't hesitate when he turned to help the others.

The massive beast lunged forward, its massive arms propelling it towards them rather fast. For something so big to move so fast was rather intriguing to them all. It swung one of its arms at Naruto. He ducked under it and raised his sword to its shoulder. The blade sliced the arm clean off, dropping it to the ground with a wet splat. The beast howled in pain at this and backhanded Naruto away. Zabuza stepped forward, his massive blade poised to gut it. He drove it into its chest, making it scream in pain as he pushed the blade up. It cried and then died as it fell in two halves. Three Infected Sangheili warriors landed down in front of him. Nagato, Konan, and Yahiko jumped on them, knocking them to the ground. They pointed their weapons into the core of the infection and fired at point blank range. Red plasma melted through their shields and armor like a hot knife through butter.

Metal cried in agony as the large tower began to bobble. Naruto looked up, his eyes widened as he saw it begin to fall in their direction. He jumped away with his team doing the same. They hit the ground rolling and jumped back to their feet just as it came down. More Infected Brutes and Sangheili got in their way. Mikoto and Tsume stepped up, their weapons drawn. Mikoto kicked one in the face, spinning it out around before digging the blade into its back. She ripped it up, split the creature in half while Tsume used her brute strength tear the rotting limbs off of them and claw them to death with her energy teko-kagi.

The Sangheili growled in annoyance. Yes this was to be done, but they wouldn't be shown up by humans, not even if they were Naruto's people. These rookies needed to know who their better was. Haer, Rauk and Ahiel stepped up, their energy swords sizzling to life as they charged in towards the enemy. Naruto followed them, his team following closely behind him as he ran behind his fellow Sangheili warriors. The three Sangheili cut and tore their way through an armada of Infected Unggoy and Jiralhanae and Sangheili.

The tower that once stood was seen melting from plasma fire that was being fired at from several hundreds of Sangheili and Jiralhanae controlled Flood. John and the others were pinned down, unable to move unless they wanted to get shot. Naruto looked around, searching for a way to help them. A ladder led to a roof. He motioned for Ahiel and Konan to take it. They climbed without a second thought; already understanding that he wanted them on sniper detail. He gave a single cut motion to Zabuza while pointing frame that was part of the ship. Zabuza nodded, showing he understood. He then pulled his rifle out, switching it from assault mode to sniper mode. The others did the same, Haer and Rauk switching from their swords to their plasma rifles as they all moved for a flanking maneuver.

Konan and Ahiel jumped onto the roof, both pulling their prospective snipers out. Konan sighted down the barrel, aiming for the first of the many Infected Brutes. Ahiel did the same but made sure to wait until they got the signal to open fire. Zabuza ran behind the supporting frame, his massive sword in hand and ready to cut through the bars. The others got into position, all of them waiting for Naruto to give the order. Naruto gave Zabuza a thumbs up telling him to begin. Konan opened fire when Ahiel did, both of them melting the Flood army with ease. The metal frame cried in protest before finally falling on the dazed Flood. It rolled along, not stopping until it fell off the side of a cliff. The others sprang up, unloading on the army of Flood.

John and his team looked up and did the same thing, all of them unloading onto the confused creatures that turned to face the new threat. Sasuke jumped down in between the group, his assault rifle up in their backs as he began spitting out rounds into them. None of them thought to turn around and were shot to death. Neji and John was just a second behind him, the other Spartans trailing behind by two more seconds. Thel was the last one down, and together, ran up the side of the ship that led to a large hole in the side of it.

"I shall remain here," Thel informed them. "I will let nothing pass." Naruto gave a motion for his team to stop, John doing the same. Sasuke nodded, giving out orders for his team to remain as well. There was no questioning that John could do it. He'd fought these little bastards enough to know how they worked. John quickly jumped down into the ship, wondering how he'd get out after getting Cortana. He also wondered what her excuse would be for bringing the Flood to Earth. Knowing her, she'd probably just state she knew he could handle it and thought the risks outweighed the gain of having her back.

As John dropped down, the others all watched for any signs of the Flood. Naruto could already see the Cruisers glassing certain spots of the planet in order to destroy the Flood. Part of him wished they'd just glass it all, but he knew that would be wrong. They were allies for the time being and would work together for both of their worlds in order to stop the Covenant. A Phantom appeared overhead, grabbing the Master Chief with its Gravlift. The Oracle was with him, its energy tentacle holding on to the device he'd seen before. A second Phantom came by to pick them up just as Rtas began glassing the ship.

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Deep inside _Shadow of Intent's _Tactical Room, Rtas, Thel, John, Lord Hood, Miranda Keys, the Oracle, and a handful of brave Sangheili warriors watched as the Oracle poked and prodded at the device. Even though John was incased in half a ton of angular MJOLNIR armor was tensed and relieved to know that Cortana was back with him. She was all he had left. Halsey had betrayed them, taking Kelly to god knows where. His Spartan IIs were either died or crippled. He'd lost his family and home, both of them actually. He lost his family back Eridanus 2 when he lived in Elysium City in the Eridanus Star System and Reach in the Epsilon Eridani System.

Now only he remained. His luck would be the death of him.

"Will it live, Oracle? Can it be saved?" Rtas asked quietly as he watched the Oracle work its magic.

Spark shook itself as he continued to work. "Uncertain," he explained. "This storage device has suffered considerable trauma. Its matrices are high unstable." He explained further.

Lord Hood looked to Miranda while biting his lip. This technology wasn't anything the Covenant had even been seen using. If he could get his hands on it might prove valuable to them in the long run, maybe not from a military point of view, but from a technology point of view. "Perhaps one of our technicians-" he began only to have Rtas cut him off with a wave of his hand.

"That will not be necessary," he stated determinedly. This was their technology; he would not see it in their hands or any other for that matter. When it was used up, he would make certain it was destroyed for safety's sake.

The device sprang to life, glowing brightly as it brought forth the image of a young woman with numbers running down her body and short cut hair. She almost instantly began speaking just as she appeared. "Chief,"

"Success!" Spark cried with joy. John held his tongue to shout at it for disturbing the moment. He knew Cortana well. She wouldn't sound so impatient unless it was important.

"High Charity, the Prophets' holy city, is on its way to Earth. With an army of F-f-flood," she stated before coming to a pause. "I can't tell you everything. It's not safe. The Gravemind, it knows I'm in the system." Her image flickered a bit, jumping around as she tried to walk. John sighed inwardly.

"It's just a message," he explained, hiding his sorrow quiet well as he motioned the device like it was nothing new for him.

Rtas blinked, catching the sorrow hidden deep in his tone. He didn't know what the figure meant to him nor did she truly care, but it was obviously coming with a warning. He tilted his head as he looked at it the image of the woman. "Let it play," he commanded.

Spark hit with a beam of light, poking the circuits back together in an effort to get more out of the message. "But it doesn't know about the portal! Where it leads! On the other side, there's a solution. A way to stop the Flood. Without firing the remaining Halo rings-" she grabbed her head before she could add more, falling down as her image faltered and became distorted for a moment while giving out a desperate cry of pain. John looked down, putting his knuckles against the hard metal of the alien ship's table as he watched her try to get back up. "Hurry, Chief. The Ark. There isn't much time." Her body became distorted and her image jerked before going still.

All was silent in the dark room until Spark spoke up. "I'm sorry," he whispered.

"No matter, Oracle," Rtas told him. "We've heard enough." Rtas fidgeted in his chair a bit as he looked over his troops. Since leaving the Covenant, it had become just them and the humans to stand against the Covenant. The Unggoy that had once worked on their ships

had left, fleeing in terror at the thought of fighting their nipple brothers. Lekgolo left as well, either unwilling to fight their own brothers as well, or just because they didn't want to fight anymore. But it was up to them to stop them. Now they knew where to go and what to do. Rtas took a deep breath, his eyes burning with fire as he spoke in a sure voice that held power and respect for those before him. "Our fight is through the portal! With the Jiralhanae! And the bastard Truth!" A collection of roars sounded from the guards that stood by.

Lord Hood look around, his eyes showing his sadness to them all. He had hoped that they'd remain here to help them take Earth back. But stopping Truth did matter a great deal. It wasn't like the Sangheili owed them anything. They'd killed them as well. Both sides still hurt from all the fighting. But when it came down to it, he knew that Earth picked the fight first back at Harvest when the Brutes showed up. "Fine," he whispered. "We'll remain here. Hold out as long as we can."

"Did you not here? Your world is doomed," Rtas narrowed his eyes on him as he stood up, both clawed hands clenching into fists. "A Flood army, a Gravemind, has you in his sights. You barely survived a small contamination." He pointed out.

"And you, Shipmaster, just glassed half a continent!" He shot back, his anger flaring at what had just been pointed out. "Maybe the Flood isn't all I should be worried about."

Rtas tensed at this. He knew how dangerous even one of them was. He had had to kill a friend because of them. "One single Flood spore can destroy a species," he told him hotly. "Were it not for the Arbiter's counsel, I would have glassed your entire planet." He hissed as he leaned forward over the table. Hood placed a hand on the table while the other was cocked back, ready for him to jump over at him.

"Sir," Miranda jumped in, calming both of them down with her words alone. "With respect, Cortana has a solution." She reminded.

"Cortana? Did you see her condition? How damaged she is. She could be corrupted for all we know." John began to ignore the two as he leaned down on the table, staring straight at her image. She wasn't gone. She couldn't be. "Her solution could be a Flood trap!"

"We should go through the portal. Find out for sure," Miranda argued, staring down the image of Cortana with determined eyes.

Lord Hood placed both arms on his hips as he turned to face her fully. "What we should do, commander, is understand, clearly that this is humanity's final stand. Here. At Earth," he paused for a moment, thinking on his words. "We go we risk everything. Every last man, woman, and child. If we stand our ground, we might just have a chance."

"No," Thel motioned towards the construct with one hand as he walked towards the Spartan. "If your construct is wrong, then the Flood has already won." He told them.

John looked down at Cortana, happy that his helmet blocked them from seeing his sad face as he spoke. High Charity was lost. And he knew

sure as hell that the top brass wouldn't let him go just for her. "I'll find Cortana's solution. And I'll bring it back." He told them slowly. He would save her as well. He'd find a way. Even if he had to break a hundred regulations he'd do it. A promise was a promise, and he always kept his promises.

Lord Hood's face faltered into a deeper sadness as he walked around the table towards him. "Earth," he almost wished he could reason with the Spartan as he continued speaking, "is all we have left. You trust Cortana that much?"

John looked back at her image before giving his reply. "Sir. Yes sir!"

Hood somehow managed to suppress his smile at the sound of his voice. "This is either the best decision you've ever made or the worst. Hell of it is, Chief? I doubt I'll live long enough to find out which." He turned around and walked out of the room, Thel breathing out the held breath he wasn't aware he'd been holding.

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Naruto sat before his two mates, both of them looking at each with smiles on their faces. Surprisingly enough, the two knew each other. This didn't bother them at all to know that they were dating the same guy, though Hinata was a bit jealous at the idea of her having him all to herself for a few days. Naruto had already explained the situation to both of them, stating that when they were prepared to leave he'd be heading out as well. This hadn't bothered them at all. Hinata seemed to accept it while Yugito instantly stated that she was going with him. Naruto knew her reasons for coming weren't for sex. It was to make sure the UNSC didn't try to use her as a weapon again.

He closed his eyes and sighed openly. "You understand that I won't let you fight, right?" How many times had he asked this now?

Yugito rolled her eyes. "I'm not going to fight," She told him calmly. "I'm going so the UNSC doesn't make me fight. I'm not a tool. Not anymore. I've been training since I could walk. I'm tired of fighting. I don't wanna fight anymore." She pulled his hand into her own.

Naruto sighed as he covered her hand with his other hand, a smile forming on his face. "Well I'm coming too," Hinata declared. Naruto blinked. Yugito he could understand, Hinata he couldn't. Hinata had no reason to come unless it was to make sure the UNSC couldn't use her to get to him. When he thought about that, he quickly nodded, accepting her onto the ship without much thought. "Good," Hinata pulled her lab coat off, stripping down to her underwear almost instantly. "Now let's see if you're as good as Yugito clams you are," she ordered. Naruto blinked and without warning was tackled to the ground by two semi-naked females.

Not what he had in mind.

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When word got out that _Forward Unto Dawn _was heading out with the Sangheili Cruisers to fight the Covenant, the first people to sign up

with the ODSs. No surprises there really. First to drop, first to fight, they always said. They'd happily go with their former enemies to some far off land for some fun in the sun fighting the alien bastards. Tech crews moved supplies of every kind onto the Dawn while hundreds more finished giving it its much needed repairs. Tech crews were helped with Huragok, them mostly doing most of work since they were quicker at it.

ODSs and Sangheili watched each other from crates like boys and girls when they first started to like each other but were too afraid to speak to the other. Chichi in his red armor was resting on a Ghost while looking around, not sure on what to say to the ODSs on the other side of the hanger of Shadow of Intent.

Johnson walked up behind him and then between them, carrying two carbines before stealing his beam rifle that rested at his feet. Chichi jumped up, not paying attention to the white and black armored warrior that was behind him. "Give me back my weapon, trash!" He spat. A fist slammed into the side of his head, sending him back onto the Ghost. When he got up, he saw that it was Naruto that had hit him, his two mates conversing with each until seeing this.

"Damn," Kimimaro whispered.

"He'd have made one hell of a Helljumper," Dustin added.

"A Helljumper?" Shizune shrieked. "I'd be more worried about him as a Spartan."

"He's ours, not yours," Thel told them as he walked through their little group carrying a SPKnr Launcher and Flamethrower. The two sides watched as Johnson and Thel walked by each other, the Oracle nodding to Naruto and his two mates while Hinata and Yugito gave it a frosty glare. Yugito had been taking a shower when the little floating bastard wondered in, wanting to see if she was alright. At first she didn't care but when it started checking her out, then she cared. Now she hated it just as much as Hinata did.

Miranda, John, and Sasuke watched as the hatch closed on the Pelican that would take Lord Hood back down to the planet to continue fighting the good fight. As the ramps closed and the Pelican took off, John turned to face Sasuke, a sly grin appearing on his face as he looked him over in his Mark VI MJOLNIR Armor. His team had been fitted with them after proving they were good enough to be called Spartans by John. He was just happy to know that they got the same things as him now.

As the Pelican dropped out of view, the ships all nosed up, preparing to go through the portal.

22. Chapter 22

Chapter 22

Dustin slammed into the training mat, his body screaming with pain from the force of the throw. He rolled over holding his back as he ran straight at his attacker. It was a man that possible far crazier than anyone or anything had ever seen. He fought like a demon. He probably even looked like a demon in appearance alone. He was given

nicknames so far out there that some people often just thought he was just a demon. There were also rumors that he'd once been in a nuthouse for various reasons, but no one knew if this was true or not.

Dustin threw a fist at his face, but he caught it with an open palm and threw him across the mat, watching with a sadistic grin as he crashed into the wall. Dustin, determined to win, got back up, despite being thrown to the ground nearly eighty times now. He glared down his opponent. Tiny eyes, buzz-cut hair, and shark like teeth. It was Suigetsu; Corporal Suigetsu, also known as "Dare Devil" for his actions in the war.

Suigetsu was always a man on a mission. Anything anyone said was impossible for anything short of Spartan he did. You named it, he blew it up. You marked it, he killed it. He was your go to guy for anything you needed done. He lived and breathed for wars like this. He'd been on so many planets, helped defend them, watch them burn, and get dragged off kicking and screaming to go back in and fight. He'd earned bars and lost them so many times that people lost track of his actual rank and just stared calling him "DD" for short.

Like most Helljumpers, he lived by their phrase, "First to drop, first to fight," but only a Spartan would do things as crazy as him. He'd been forced to jump out burning Pelicans as they plummeted straight for the ground for a fun filled an eighty meter fall. He'd jumped off eight story buildings to tackle any enemy that was about to eat someone. He'd broken every bone in his body at least three or four times. He wore all of his scars like a badge of honor. Every time he got thrown into the hospital he became a womanizer, often times considering himself, the ultimate ladies man. When he left each time he was told to never come back, but about two weeks later he'd be back with something new broken or a wound so bad he should have been dead.

Other Helljumpers said that if he was any crazier or better, he'd be a Spartan. But his last stunt was something that not even a Spartan would do. He asked Miranda for a one night stand during their off time. Yeahâ€¦ he was way the hell out there to date someone older than himself and from the Navy. That was just wrong. And to make it worse, as soon as he got turned down he went to pick a fight with the rookie with a bet that if he won, he'd let the rookie name the next person, no matter the rank, be considered a rookie. Of course, if Suigetsu won he'd make him walk around with a red bull's-eye painted on the back of suit. The only good thing was that he was second in the case of being the craziest ODST. The number one spot went to the other ODST ranked Lieutenant onboard who was the first to sign up. Ryan Epp was his name, and if anyone was as crazy as him, it was Suigetsu.

Suigetsu grabbed him as he by the face after ducking under a wide punch and threw him face first into the ground. Dustin went down and didn't try to get up. He was out cold. Without hesitation, Suigetsu looked to Kimimaro, motioning for him to throw the spray paint. He quickly drew the image of a target on his back, chuckling as he did. When he was done, he dropped the can on his head, waking the beaten ODST up.

"Morning sunshine," he greeted happily. "I won. So go walk around now." He ordered. The rookie got up and did so without question. He

knew that there was no point in arguing with him. He lost fair and square. He quickly ran out of the training hall that Elites were letting them use. A few had been watching, unsure of what was actually going on. Suigetsu walked up to his fellow ODSs, a sick grin on his face. "Who's next," he gasped out. No one spoke up. "Pussies," he broke down into laughing fits as a few began chewing on their lips at the insult.

Kimimaro shifted in the odd chair he was in as he spoke. "If he gets shot in the back while onboard this ship, I'm going to have you killed," Kimimaro told him with a growl. Suigetsu waved the threat off with a grin. "So what do you think," he looked over at the three Elites that were sitting by the door, their heads up looking at the artificial light with interest. When the ODSs weren't looking at them, they were looking back at them. Funny. Right?

"Sir. With all respect, I don't get paid to think. I get paid to drop in and kick ass and look damn good doing it." Suigetsu replied. The others began laughing at his answer, knowing it was true. Orders were orders. No two ways about it. "But—" he continued seriously. "I can trust them. I understand what it's like to be betrayed by the ones you respect and love."

"As do I," Kimimaro mumbled sadly.

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Rtas looked down at the tablet on his desk. He mulled over the repairs being done to Phantoms. He'd read the report about the ODSs that had shot Naruto's Phantom out of the sky. After that he had decided to make it clear just which one belonged to whom. He didn't need another one getting shot out of the sky by their allies so he had them all get a new paint job. It actually wasn't his choice of paint, but in the end, he had to admit that it was rather interesting. They were being painted green of all colors.

The doors to his room opened with a hiss. He hit a few keys on the tablet before turning to the person who'd entered. It was Naruto. He looked confused as he sulked in. Naruto plopped down on Rtas's bed, still not looking at him. Rtas could think of two things that had happened to him and a third being more of a funny male moment that all Sangheili would suffer from, from having two mates. For a long time Naruto remained silent, not speaking or really moving. He was just sitting there. Rtas sighed, deciding to break the ice.

"You real father," he began slowly. "Why did you never take his name when you learned he was your father?" Naruto looked up at him before just crashing down on the bed. "Do you despise your blood father?"

Naruto closed his eyes. "Did you ever chase someone that you wanted to surpass in terms of power and greatness?" Rtas narrowed his eyes on him. The truth was that he once had, but he had surpassed him so long ago that he'd forgotten the name of the person he strove to surpass. "My father, the one that made me this way, was the one I was chasing. In some way...I think I am still chasing after him. But I know I'll never pass him up."

"You should never give up on that dream then, Uzumaki."

"That's the thing, Rtas. It was never a dream to surpass him until just a few days ago." Naruto paused, considering his words. "Maybe I was trying to do it without realizing it, but now that I've gotten two mates, I've begun to worry about my strength in protecting them. That's why I began thinking about this. How can I surpass him when I never heard anything but stories about him? You can't judge someone just by their stories. I need to see it with my two eyes. That's just how I am."

"Do you hate him?"

I chuckled at his words. He didn't know if he did or didn't hate him really. "I don't know," he whispered. "I can't say I do hate him, because if I did, I don't think I'd be here today." He paused to think for a moment. "I often wondered what my life would have been like had he chosen another person to be a host for the beast, but when I do, all I can think about is that I'd be dead. I would have been killed during the attack on my world. But when I think about him and his actions, I begin to understand why he did it." Rtas leaned forward upon hearing this. "I think he loved the village and its people so much that he was blinded by the true ways of all sentient beings. He wanted me to be viewed as a hero for my actions, but he never stopped to think it through."

"So you hate him for cursing you with that burden but rejoice in the fact that it saved you in the long run?" Naruto nodded slowly. Rtas looked down for a moment. "If you were in his shoesâ€¦would you have done the same thing?"

Naruto blinked a few times, trying to figure that one out. His father loved the village that was without question. But would he have made a great father. Would he have fought to keep him alive if he survived the attack of the Kyuubi and the sealing? Would he have stayed by his side in the end? Naruto wondered just how things might have been done if he was in his shoes. Would he have had the power to do what was right for a total stranger in the village? Or would he have abandoned them to die the deaths they deserved?

He closed his eyes as he answered. "I thinkâ€¦in the end I would have done the same thing to my child as well." Rtas looked away upon hearing those words. "Back thenâ€¦ No. Even the way I am now I couldn't do something like that. I couldn't abandon those who cared for me or a stranger. I would have done the same thing for the safety of my people." Those words left a bad taste in his mouth. Maybe that was how Minato felt when he did the same thing. "Rtas, I'm tired of fighting. I wanna stop the fighting. I'll do whatever it takes to stop it, so long as I don't have to fight anymore when it's over. When this is overâ€¦I'm not fighting anymore."

The Shipmaster chuckled at his words. "Believe it or not, Uzumaki, but when the war is over, the fighting will stop." Naruto looked over at him with a smile. "When the war is over, I'm returning to Sanghelios to stay at the Vadam Keep with our friends. I have done enough fighting, as have you. We have both gained and lost immeasurable counts of honor. We've both bared with humiliation at the hands of the Spartans. We've even killed them. But when this war is over, all of the past aggressions will be put behind us. We will head home and stay there. I'm sure with everything you've done to help end the war, you will be greatly accommodated for your actions. Perhaps Thel will open up a plot of land for you to grow on. I

believe at the base of one of the many mountains is a plot of land with a forest."

Naruto smiled. He knew the forest that he spoke of. "I think I'd like living there."

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"FF," Screamed the mass of Grunts that ran around in terror. There were hundreds of them, some already while others were being put down just as quickly. Hinata was behind the firing squad that screamed at cursed at one another as they fired on them. When all the Grunts were dead, the screen went black, signaling the end of the game. Hinata had brought up a very interesting piece of equipment for the members of Naruto's team to use, along with anyone else that wanted to use it. Shadow of Intent had a weapons training deck to it that could be used to practice with certain weapons. Hinata redesigned with a large screen and images of all known Covenant races except for the Elites.

When the screen went black, the other members all put the remote weapons down to wait for the scores. A few seconds later, the scores came back.

Zabuza: -1 Kill(s)

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Mikoto: 45 Kill(s)
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Tsume: 24 Kill(s)

Yahiko: 69 Kill(s)

Nagato: 68 Kill(s)

Konan: 110 Kill(s)

Hanabi: 349 Kill(s)

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Neji: 354 Kill(s)
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All eyes ended up Konan. Out of all of them, she had the most kills between the rookies. Hanabi nodded in approval while the others mumbled curses that ranged from "Lucky kills," and all the way up to "My gun is broken," from the others. Hinata began typing on her laptop, waiting for them to get ready for the next match. The door hissed open. Everyone turned to find a tall man in black with the name Bloodangel written on his name tag. He had the rank for Lieutenant on his uniform.

"I heard your having a contest of some sort down here. Mind if join the party?" He turned to Hinata, giving her a good guy smile. For an ODEST, he was by far the strangest guy on the ship. Hinata knew him well. He'd dated her once. She called it off the minute she got home after the first date. The guy thought he was God's gift to every woman on the planet. His red hair was cut short and always well groomed. His face was always clean shaven; say for the small patch around a scar on his chin. He was tall, well built, and crazy to boot. His name was Ryan Epp, the Helljumpers' craziest guy in the known universe. And what he just did added another notch on his belt for most insane stunts.

"Yes, we have a contest going. But this is training for Mad Fox." She explained quickly. Ryan didn't seem to get the message. Two years; and this guy was still head over heels for her. Did he not know that she was taken, or was this just another one of his insane stunts? "If you'd like, I can have a Sangheili come get you when we're through up here." She offered. He looked over at the two Spartans, a brow raised in curiosity.

"Those freaks are here so why can't I be here?" Hinata chewed on her lower lip. She wondered just how nuts he really was. It was true that Spartans and ODSTs got along about as well as cats and dogs. The only difference between the two was a suit of armor, physical mutations to the body, and discipline. Lots and lots and lots of discipline actually. Spartans were brave, not crazy. ODSTs were crazy, not brave. But still, those Spartans were her siblings. She hated that this man that she once had eyes for would put them down like this.

"I'm sorry, Ryan, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave."

"Or what? You going to get your freak of a boyfriend to come up here and kick my ass?" He leaned over the table, invading her personal space. Hinata wished she had Spartan training at the moment. She'd seen Hanabi knock people out with a tissue. She wanted to know how to do that right now on him. Something grabbed him by the shoulder, whipping him around so fast that he spun one more time before coming to a stop. Something hard hit him in the face, sending a tooth skipping along the ground.

"Sir. Sorry, Sir!" Franklin Deleon said hastily. Ryan blinked away the pain from the blow before grabbing him by the vest and tossing him out the doors.

"Donut," He growled. "Why did you hit me?!" He shouted. Donut, as he was oddly enough called, had light brown hair cut short and purple eyes. He got stuck with the name after someone supposedly caught him having sex with a donut. He denied it of course, but by that time, the damage was done, and his CO, who was Ryan, decided to give him that as his name. The man never called anyone by their name actually. He just gave them names on the fly.

Donut got up, his head ringing from the blow before dragging his CO out of into the hallway to start a fight with him. About that time, Ahiel, Haer, and Rauk entered while watching the fight before the doors closed. Ahiel shook his, not really understanding the reason the two were fighting as he raised up three plasma rifles with cables attached to them. Hinata smiled and understood what they wanted to do. Haer was busy looking at the scores.

"How did you get negative one kills, Zabuza?" He asked harshly. Zabuza rolled his eyes as the images went back to the beginning when everyone was loaded in. Twenty Marines, five ODSTs, one of them looking a bit too much like Ryan, and about a handful of Sangheili were also on screen. In the distance, a hundred, possibly even thousands of Unggoy came screaming down on them. Zabuza quickly opened fire just as an ODST jumped up screaming something. He blew the back of his head off.

"Nice shot!" Rauk congratulated happily.

"That's not a good thing though." Hanabi informed him.

"It is in my book." Hinata told him. She brought up the names of each person. Some were randomly generated while others; this being the ODSs, all had the same name and look. "He just killed my ex-boyfriend for the fifth time." Everyone was speechless for a moment, wondering how the quiet and well mannered Hyuga could be so evil to a former lover.

Neji, while he opened fire on the first wave of Grunts, said, "I didn't like the bastard anyways," as he brought them all down.

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"and that was the second time that I got crabs." Dustin told them. Tucker was on the ground rolling and laughing so hard that his face turned blue. Kimimaro was punching his gut to keep from laughing like him. Hana and Isaribi were laughing without care; faces blue and on the ground as they tried to stop laughing. It wasn't really something to laugh at though. Dustin had just finished telling them about his second time he had sex. Great story if you were an idiot. Or just like to have the weird ass kind where you get stuck with someone that didn't know what they were doing. He threw in a few jokes about being forced to use a compass, a map, a manual, and a key. It wasn't so much that he didn't sell the joke; it was his weird hand maneuvers that he went through while talking about it.

Shizune quickly got her laughing fits under control and was able to look him square in the face while saying, "You are an idiot," as she leaned over to ruffle his shaggy brown hair. It was against regulations at the moment, but it wasn't like he'd had time to get it cut. He'd gone to Delta Halo with Miranda and then got stuck back in New Mombassa to hold off the Covenant ground forces. And now he was on Forward Unto Dawn, heading to who knows where to fight a battle that could hopefully end the war. No one was going to yell at him for his hair being just a bit too long.

"I get no respect," he laughed. They all broke down laughing as well. "So, Hana, what do you think of that chick, Deidara?"

Hana was still lying on the ground and had stopped laughing at this point. She didn't have the ability to laugh anymore because of how blue her face had turned. She sat up, an eyebrow raised in curiosity. "Okay, first off, she's a guy. Secondly, just because we both like blowing shit up doesn't mean anything is going to happen between us."

"She's a he?" He asked with wide eyes. "Damn I'd still do him." The others instantly began throwing bottled waters at him with a loud collection of boos and cheers for him. When it was all over, the rookie looked Hana over. "I'd do you too. Maybe we could have a three-way when this is over?"

"Maybe you'll let me step on your balls," she shot back with a grin. There was no hiding that there was romance between the two. But it was the short of romance that was spawned by talent alone. While he was the rookie of the squad, he was actually an ace sharpshooter. He'd made it without even trying actually. That was usually why he

was given a sniper rifle. He was skilled with explosives, but not like Hana. Hana had it down to an art that almost seemed beautiful to watch if she did it correctly. They fought most of the time, but they did get along rather well. In fact there were rumors that they were secretly dating. But no one could prove it.

"Only if you let me grope you."

"Knock it off, Romeo. And you too, Juliet," Suigetsu growled. They laughed at him from his spot on the mat. Kimimaro had laid a beating down on him when the rookie came back with black scorch marks all over his suit. How he survived whatever hit was a mystery, but after a while, they managed to make him down grade the bet to where he had to wear a "Kick me" sign on his back. With that thought in mind however, Hana quickly kicked him, remembering that he couldn't do or say anything so long as it was still on him for the next twenty-four hours. "Kick his ass!"

"Shut up!" Tayuya screamed as she kicked him in the ribs. He turned over, holding the bruised ribs that she kicked. Since they had few ODSs to go down first to secure landing zones and whatnot, she was made an ODS for the time being. Dressed in black, she looked ready to kill and tough as nails to match. She'd made certain that she was stuck with Kimimaro's team. In the end, she got stuck with their team and had to put up with the other joining member, Suigetsu. They were getting along so well.

"What about the other guys?" Isaribi asked. Deidara, Tobi, and Hidan were sitting in the corner talking about something. When they noticed that the eyes of the Helljumpers were on them. They quickly jumped up, expecting anything. Before anyone could speak, the doors hissed open with two black figures still fighting. "Ryan!" Isaribi shouted as she jumped up. The two stopped fighting long enough to look up at Isaribi had she gave them a crisp salute before punching Donut off of him so she could grab Ryan by the collar of his uniform to drag him to eye level. "You are the lousiest man I have ever slept with." She punched him in the gut.

"I could get you for striking a superior," he gasped out.

"I could get you for rape," she whispered huskily into his ear.

_Right, _he though. _Woman can get away with it, guys can't. That's screwed up. _He broke free of the hold, a flash of their last night fun crossing through his mind. He was on top; she was on the ground panting and covered in sweat. "Anyway, Kimimaro, we got a problem."

Kimimaro nodded in agreement. The problem was that the two were the highest ranking ODSs on the ship. It wouldn't make much sense to have both of them giving orders. That would just cause massive amounts of confusion, and both of them wanted to avoid that at all costs. So they had two options in dealing with this. The first was a straight up fist fight for control, which Ryan would love to have done. The second was a contest of luck: Drawing straws. It was an old way of just saying, "I have better luck than you," but given the fact that they had about only a fifty ODSs on the ship, and about seventy Marines on the ship, that didn't give them much to separate for teams.

But since it was Kimimaro he had to fight with, he could honestly say he wasn't surprised when he told Tayuya to get some straws. A moment later, Tayuya came back with two straws. Suigetsu voiced the words going through their minds without hesitation. "I hope you cut those right, you red haired bitch." This got him another kick, but he simply laughed through it all. Ryan went first, drawing a small straw. It was played out by who had the longest would win. Kimimaro grinned at the idea of a quick victory. He pulled his out and found it to be the same size. All eyes fell on Tayuya as she continued to give Suigetsu a thrashing with her one leg.

"Tayuya," they both said in unison.

"What?!" She kicked him one more time, making him laugh and grunt in pain as he rolled over. They raised their straws. She squinted to look at them before her eyes went wide. "Oops," she whispered. They threw them to the ground. "Fuck it. One of you lead half of the troops the other leads the other half. Problem solved." She went back to beating Suigetsu for calling her a red haired whore.

They looked at each other with grief written in their eyes. "I'll take her. You take the rookies." Kimimaro told him. Ryan blinked.

"What rookies?" Kimimaro motioned towards the three in the corner. "Oh shit," he whispered. "I'll be your bitch for a week if you let me take the fiery redhead." He offered up. Kimimaro shook his head after a split second thought about it. "Fuck me sideways," he groaned while walking up to the three. He made sure to kicked Suigetsu in the head with his boot, leaving him dazed and confused before Kimimaro called Tayuya off and helped him to his feet.

Deidara was the first one to spot him. "Can I help you?"

Ryan blinked. "Alright, listen up. My name is Ryan Epp, but you can call me Bloodangel. I will be your CO for the rest of the time off Earth. While you are under my command, anyone caught goofing off will be shot in the ass, kicked in the ass, and brutally killed later on. I don't like people that goof off. Okay," he looked them over.

"What does "CO" mean?" Tobi asked.

"I'm going to call Spiky, Spiky," he motioned too Tobi who instantly pointed to himself. "Yes. Your name is Spiky from now on."

"But I am Tobi. Tobi is my name. And Tobi is a good boy."

"Tobi is a gay name, just like your hair, Spiky. So I'm calling you Spiky." Tobi shook his head. "Okay then. You're up next, girly face. What's your name?"

"I'm a man, and my name is Deidara."

"You look like a girl so I'm calling you Chick, Chick. Anything else I need to know about, Chick? I can already tell Spiky is dumb as a box of rocks. So don't let me down pretty girl."

A vein throbbed on the side of Deidara's head. "Keep that up, and I'll blast you straight to hell with my art!" He growled.

"Art can't blow someone up unless you use rockets, Chick."

"I'll blow you up with anything I can make art out of, because art is a blast."

"You like to blow stuff up?" Deidara nodded angrily. "Good then, I like you already. Get a sex change so I can screw you and we'll be okay."

"I'm a guy goddamn it!"

"At least you know how cuss. What's your name son?"

Hidan blinked once as he stuffed his Jashin crest back into his vest pocket. "My name is Hidan. I love to kill people. That's all you need to know, Bloodangel."

"I'm going to call you Holyman. You sound religious and you strike me as a religious man anyways. If I tell you to make someone religious, what the hell do think I want you to do?"

"Convert them to the ways of Lord Jashin." Hidan bowed deeply at his lords' name.

"NO!" Ryan punched Hidan in the face, knocking him the ground hard. "I want you to make them holy for me. And by "holy" I mean shot them full of holes. Got it, Holyman!"

Hidan slammed a hand onto the table, groggily getting up as he did. "You are an asshole." Ryan punched him again, once again knocking him to the ground. "I got it," he muttered for his place on the floor.

"Good," Ryan sounded happy now. "Now meet the other asshole to the greatest ODSST squad ever put together." He pulled Donut in close, shoving him face to face with Deidara. "His name is Donut because we once caught him fucking a donut. He's so horny I'd sleep with both eyes open if I were you, Chick." Deidara seriously began wondering what might happen if he just kill him right now. Would he get a public beheading or just get shot once in the head? "Now that the introductions are complete, we got things to do. Let's head on down to the training room. I wanna teach you girls how to shoot." Ryan walked away, leaving them behind for a moment.

"I seriously hate that guy." Deidara grumbled while standing up.

"Tobi hates him too." Tobi stood up a second later, following Donut and Deidara as they began following their crazy CO.

"He has angered Lord Jashin, and he will pay with his life." Hidan followed the others a second later.

As they walked out, the other ODSSTs began laughing at the new rookies. "I almost feel sorry for them," Isaribi commented. "Almost," she repeated happily just as the Klaxons began blaring. "Looks like it's time to get ready for combat."

"Yes indeed. Yes indeed." Kimimaro told them happily. "Get to the

hanger. Get inside the Pelicans. We didn't bring any hot dropping equipment, so no fun filled fiery ride down to whatever ground we can get on."

"Yes Sir!" They all saluted him before leaving.

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Naruto's team finished getting geared up. Before he put his helmet on, Hinata jumped up to kiss him on the lips. "For luck," she told him. Yugito raised a brow before doing the same, her excuse just a bit better.

"You wanted tongue." She told him. Hinata went red in the face but did nothing afterwards. She'd already given him her body and a good luck kiss. Doing it again would ruin his luck. "We'll be doing what we can to help out up here. But we're not fighting unless we have to." She told him before they walked out of the hanger.

Naruto smiled as he clicked his helmet on. He was suddenly spun around, an angry ODSST staring him down. "What's your problem," Naruto asked heatedly. The man, who was named Ryan, glared at him before shoving him away.

"Freak," he growled.

"What did you say?"

"I said you're a freak, Freak!" He jumped inside Pelican while Naruto went to a Phantom. _I hope your Phantom goes down, Freak. You stole Hinata from me. _He watched Naruto go into the aft of the Phantom before his ramp closed. _I will get her back. I will have her again. She's my reason for fighting. _

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Master Chief loaded up in Kilo-Two-Three with Sasuke, Haku, and Konohamaru. There were a few ODSSTs inside already. He read their name tags. Kimimaro, Isaribi, Hana, and Tayuya. He grinned. He knew Tayuya was good. The others, he didn't know much about them. He hoped they were good. God only knew where they were about to come out at. He'd need all the help and luck he could get to make it through whatever they were about to go through.

He only hoped that whatever they were about to come out at had land. He'd rather fight on dirt than in space. Space was for the Navy men and women, not a Marine. He'd feel safer on the ground than in space anyways. So long as he could plant his feet on the ground, he was home.

"Strap in," He whispered as he walked to the front of the Pelican. Johnson was strapped in just behind Hocus. She was dawned in full flight gear. If they got hit, the only one he had to worry about was Johnson dying. "How much longer until we're out?"

"Not sure, but the Elites think it will be in a matter of minutes." Johnson replied slowly. "You think we'll get him now?"

"We have to. He's a threat to the universe. We'll get him and the Brutes." John walked into the aft of the Pelican, waiting for them to

get the signal to move out.

23. Chapter 23

Chapter 23

Ten sections of space exploded with blue-white beam of energy as the fabric of space and time was destroyed to allow the Sangheili ships to exit Slipspace. As they exited Slipspace, sensors pinged back, information of a fleet consisting of thirty Jiralhanae controlled ships waiting for them. The crew all tenses at the sight alone. The fleet was three times their fighting force. They had more fighters, better weapon as well no doubt, and all of them had the Prophet on their side. But that wouldn't detour them. They came here to kill them. And they would kill all of them.

Onboard _Shadow of Intent, _Chichi looked over his sensors, his eyes narrowing with anger as he turned to face Rtas. "Jiralhanae ships! Standard line! Shipmaster! They outnumber us three to one!" He reported.

Rtas leaned forward, the fantasm of grins appearing on his mandibles as he spoke. "Then it is an even fight," he whispered. "All cruiser! Fire at will! Burn their mongrel hides!" He ordered while slamming his fist down on the chair.

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John walked through the aft of Kilo-Two-Three with a frown on his face. He'd gotten ready to head out only to find out that they still had another thirty minutes. He had decided to go make sure the others were all strapped in and ready to go when they suddenly had to change the original time back to when they were coming out, which was right now. His radio crackled and popped before Miranda's voice came over it. _"Truth's ship isn't taking part in the attack! He must have gone to ground!" _

Johnson, who was now strapping back in gave his reply as he jumped into the Co-Pilot seat. "Rodger that, Ma'am! We're on him!" He turned to face Hocus. "Kick the door!" He ordered. She nodded and pressed a few buttons before the Pelican in front of them dropped.

"_Troopers," _Tucker's voice sounded over the radios. _"We are green and very, very goddamn mean!" _He shouted as their Pelican, the one up front fell down towards the oddly shaped installation.

"_We are dropping into hell, troopers!" _Ryan added as their Pelican, the one in front of Kilo-Two-Three, dropped as well.

Everyone experienced a moment of zero-gee before the thrusters kicked on, pointing them nose down towards the world below. It was too big for them to see the thing entirely, but Johnson really didn't care. Cruisers and _Dawn _opened up on the fleet of Jiralhanae ships, killing one of them before they managed to return fire. The Pelicans dodged and weaved through enemy and friendly fire. One of them got its engines tagged, causing it to go into a spiraling spin before exploding. John opened the door to the cockpit, wanting to see what was going on outside. They were already in the atmosphere of the

world. He sighed as he walked back into the aft of the ship.

John's radio crackled again. _"We good, Hocus?"_

"_She's a little cooked Sergeant Major, but she'll hold."_

"_Alright then! Pop the hatch!" _

John glanced out towards the ramp as he slammed a magazine into place for his sniper rifle. He watched the hatch/ramp open up, the bright light momentarily blinding him and the other ODSs in the Pelican. When their eyes were to finally adjust to the bright light, or in John's case, have his faceplate polarize to compensate, all they saw was sand. Lots and lots of sand. Sand as far as the eye could see. Mountains were to their left or to the right of the Pelican as it began bringing them around to drop off the ODSs and Spartans.

"That's some view," Kimimaro stated.

"_Enjoy it while you can. As soon as we land we're right back to it." _Johnson informed the ODS. _"Priority one: Secure a landing zone for the Commanders' Frigate. We need all the Intel we can get on wherever the hell we are." _The Pelican roared over a small ledge and hovered a few feet off the ground. The ODSs jumped off first, their battle rifles up and searching targets. _"Stand to Marines. Go! Go! Go!"

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John jumped out, his sniper rifle up and looking for a target. He didn't find any.

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"Chick, when we land I want you to shot to kill!" Ryan shouted over the roar of the engines. "Spike, you're to run around and get their attention. Holyman, I want you to make them all religious. Donut, kill everything that doesn't look human to you. Do you understand me?"

Deidara gawked at him. He could understand his orders. He could understand his reasoning. But what he couldn't understand was how he managed to give them orders like that while being so calm and carefree about it at the moment. At the moment they were spinning out of control in a burning Pelican that was on a collision course with god knows what. The pilot had killed by a plasma blast that also melted the cockpit. This of course threw them into a spin because no one was flying it and because one of the wings, along with an engine, was taken out by plasma fire. When they went into the spin the ramp busted and went flying open, throwing the other three that had been in the aft with them. Now it was just them and Donut. All of them were strapped in at the moment. Only Tobi was screaming in fear. Hidan was screaming in joy along with Ryan while Deidara and Donut decided to keep their mouths shut.

"Are you unaware of our current situation, Lieutenant?" Donut asked. His voice was just as calm and carefree. Deidara wondered if this was actually a normal thing for them.

"No. I'm unaware of our current situation." He hissed back with every ounce of sarcasm he could muster. The ground began to close in on

them, making them all tense at it. "Standby ladies. We are coming in hot."

Tobi closed his eyes as the Pelican slammed into the ground, bouncing straight back up into the air for a moment before coming back down. The engines forced it to keep moving. It flew straight into the side of a mountain as it skidded along the ground; the engines remained on and trying to push the ship straight through the mountain. When the engines finally died down it was because the metal holding them to the ship had been so hot that it made them all continue with a force of their thrust and send them flying away. Three tiny thuds sounded in the distance.

Tobi opened his eyes and all he saw was darkness. "Tobi is afraid of the dark," he whispered.

"Spike, shut up. Donut, get the ramp. It looks like it shut on us in the crash. Holyman, get ready to make them religious. Chick, back him up but don't have sex with him." Ryan ordered through his fit of coughs. Donut was unresponsive for a moment. Ryan got up and walked over to him, shaking the young man a few times before he became coherent. "Are you alright?" Donut placed a hand on his helmet like he was trying to reach his head. "Donut, what's our mission?"

He coughed once before answering with, "To insure the survival of John Conner."

Ryan patted him on the back. "That's close enough. Now get the door." Donut shook loose from his harness and walked up to the ramp controls. He pressed the buttons a few times before they finally began to work. The ramp began to open and a spike went zipping in through an open space. Donut shut the door just as fast as he could. Ryan saw this but snorted at it. "I said open her up, didn't I?"

"Sir, there are a lot of Brutes outside."

"I don't give a damn what's outside. I want that door open and the bastards killed." Donut blinked from inside his helmet. He couldn't hear them screaming anymore for their blood so that had to mean that they were gone. He pressed the switch. The hydraulics cried in protest as the ramp hatch opened up and dropped to the ground. The Brutes lay dead at the edge of the ramp. Their killers were behind them dressed in white and black armor with swords and odd guns in hand. Ryan took one look at them and laughed. "Wellâ€¦ if isn't the Freak and his team."

Naruto tilted his head a bit, his tail twitching in anger at the name given to him by this man. He wanted to kill him right now but he couldn't without alerting the other Brute teams that were in the area.

A single spike round flew through them, splitting them up after it nicked the side of Ryan's helmet, splintering it and sending him to the ground. The others rolled for safety. The other ODSs took cover beside Naruto's team as a hail of more spikes flew at them. Naruto looked at the downed human. Ryan was bleeding from the head and not moving.

_Stupid bastard got what he deserved, _Naruto thought as he looked

around his cover. Ten Jiralhanae and about twenty Unggoy were firing at them. Naruto looked to his team. Konan was gone. He couldn't see her. Zabuzza was gripping the massive sword while trying to find an opening to charge them. Nagato and Yahiko were blind firing on the enemy. Mikoto was looking around the cover as well. Ahriel, Haer, and Rauk were waiting for their orders. They'd rush in without question if ordered too.

A trail of red plasma zipped through the sky from the cliff overhead. Konan was up top with her sniper out. Naruto would have to give her credit later. Right now he needed to focus on the task at hand.

He gave his team a simple nod before running out from cover with his hands going to his katana hilts. He rushed in as Konan, Mikoto, Nagato and Yahiko opened fire on them. Zabuzza, Ahriel, Haer, and Rauk all followed behind him with swords drawn. Five Jiralhanae turned to face them and pointed towards them as they commanded the Unggoy to attack. It was already too late. The team firing had picked them off first knowing that they were more of a threat than the stupid Jiralhanae. By the time the Jiralhanae figured it out it was too late. Naruto's team cut them apart.

A smoky haze covered the battlefield for a moment, making the team wonder if they got them all. "W-what happened?" Naruto groaned inside his helmet. Ryan was back up and alive. He was walking up to his team while shaking his head. He could see only desert sand and caves that were connected to sections of the mountain they had slammed into. He stumbled his way up to Donut. "Report," he bellowed.

Donut looked back at the battlefield as Naruto and the others walked up to him. "We killed the enemy." He replied bluntly.

Ryan looked over at Naruto with a snort. "He's still alive though. So you didn't kill them all. Idiot." "I can see that. Good job, Donut. When we get back I'll get you a donut for some fun." Donut rolled his eyes in his helmet as the two teams converged on them. "Alright, listen up everyone, you too Freak Team. We need to find a landing zone for the Commanders' Frigate. So we're going to search out a location that she can defend easily. Let's get moving. I wanna find more targets since you girls killed them all while I was out cold."

"I'm not a girl though," Yahiko informed Naruto over the radio. Naruto dismissed Yahiko's complaining as he walked up to Ryan, tearing the remains of his helmet off as he did. Ryan was about to complain before Naruto removed a piece of the helmet that had splintered into the side of his head. "You're going to bleed out if you don't get that looked patched up," he answered before Ryan could speak up. Naruto motioned to Konan for some bandages. She handed him something white and with a sticky side to it.

"NO WAY IN HELL!" Ryan suddenly screamed as Naruto prepared to apply the bandage. He swatted it away before Naruto could put it on him. "You're not putting a maxi pad on my face!" Naruto blinked. Konan blinked as well. A girl had given it to her while they were resting during their ride here. She claimed it was like a bandage when she found her spotting. She honestly didn't know what it was used for. Now she had an idea but since she was inside a suit that would keep her safe she decided she didn't need it.

"You'll die," Naruto told him calmly.

"I'd rather die than have a maxi pad stuck to my face!"

Naruto stared at him with blinking eyes.

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The Spartans all took cover as they waited for John to take the first shot. A team of ODSTs had beaten them here. Tucker's Pelican had beaten them here but had been shot down as well. His team had picked themselves back up and scouted the area. They were waiting for the Chief to get here before they moved out. Now that he was here they could move forward. The only thing stopping them were the Brutes, Jackals and Grunts that were guarding the entrance to a cave they needed to head through. It wouldn't be hard for the Spartans to climb the cliff but they might have some trouble.

The muffled crack of a sniper rifle sounded and a single Brute in blue armor that had to be the captain fell down while missing a chunk of its face. The others all jumped up looking for the thing that killed their leader when they too started falling down. Sasuke and Neji jumped up out of cover and mowed the Grunts down with their BRs. Haku and Tenten fired their rifles at the Jackals that were taking cover behind their shields. They swept low taking their legs out and allowing them to shred them with the rest of their rounds. Konohamaru and Hanabi tossed grenades behind covering and fleeing Grunts and Jackals, sending their broken bodies flying into the air.

From start to finish the fight only lasted about thirty seconds. A coordinated attack was a bitch for them to deal with. An Elite would have been more disciplined in dealing with them. Not these guys. The Brutes relied heavily on just bashing their way through you.

The ODSTs and Spartans jumped down from their spots and walked up towards the cave after restocking on ammo that had been dropped from a Pelican overhead. Kimimaro pulled out his side arm and fire into the darkness. A grunt sounded from inside the darkness before a thud sounded. No one said anything as they walked inside the crystal covered cave to find a dead Jackal with a carbine. Haku shot it once more in the head to make sure it was dead before following the others.

As they walked through the small tunnel the small crystals would light up from white to blue depending on who walked past it first. If Sasuke walked past them first it turned blue. If John walked past one first it would turn white. Konohamaru took an interest in a few of them and broke them off to give to Anders and Hinata for later study. He knew that they'd have fun checking them out.

When they came to the end of the tunnel they found more Covenant troops and a Phantom putting an AA Turret together. A single Jackal was patrolling the side of it with a Beam Rifle. Kimimaro took aim with his battle rifle. He squeezed off one burst that took its head off. As its body hit the ground, spike rounds and plasma splattered against the rocks around them. The UNSC Marines took cover as the fire intensified.

Kimimaro moved his head just a bit as a spike round zipped across the boulder he was taking cover behind. He glared at the small hole

created by the thing before growling out orders to his team. He gave single cut motions to them and they nodded while running towards the metal structure that overlooked the spot the Covenant were firing on them from. The Spartans got the same orders and quickly began jumping to the ground and rushing the Brutes as the ODS'Ts took out the Grunts and Jackals.

John landed down behind a large rock that was instantly bombarded by plasma from Grunts that hadn't been picked off yet. He spun around his cover and put a bullet in each of their head. The fell flipped backwards from the force of the projectile before hitting the ground. A golden Brute ran at him, its brute launcher jammed. It grabbed the barrel of its gun and used it as an ax on him. He missed the first swing and the second one. The third swing ended up hitting him in the side. John's shields fell to a quarter charge before reached up to grabbed its head and twist it. The Brute stood tall as it raised the weapon high above its head before finally realizing it was dead.

John looked for a new target.

There were no more targets.

"_That was quick!" _Tayuya shouted over the radios. John knew it was just an ODS'T's way of dealing with things. Anything done too quickly sometimes bugged them.

Plasma fire splashed onto the ground. Everyone took cover as a Phantom appeared overhead. A grunt manning one of the turrets fired down on them while cursing them in its dog like language. Two Hunters came down the Gravlift. The two Hunters raised their massive cannons as they began glowing with green energy. John's eyes widened as they both pointed their weapons at him. They fired two tear drops of plasma at him. John jumped behind the large rock that only lasted for a brief moment before being vaporized by the intense heat.

The others began firing on them. Their rounds only bounced off their hardened plates of armor though, doing little to no damage to them. John stood back up. He primed two plasma grenades and threw them into the midsection of their bodies. Two flashes of heat and thunder echoed from the spots the Hunters were. Smoke covered them and when it faded to badly injured Hunters stood with their weapons targeting Hanabi. They fired at her. She side stepped both of the blasts and gave them an aged old greeting before Kimimaro and Tucker put them down with two grenades that they punched into the damaged sections of their bodies. They exploded and fell in two.

"Goddamn that was fun!" Suigetsu shouted. Plasma fire rained down from the ledge above them. A Brute in golden armor was leading a squad of Grunts into battle. The Grunts chunked plasma grenades down on the fire team. Each throw came up short or was thrown well behind the teams so they didn't have to worry about dodging them. Suigetsu was taking cover beside a growling Kimimaro. The Spartans ran straight for the enemy forces that were firing down on them. "There is no way I'm letting them take all the credit." Suigetsu jumped up, his battle rifle firing tight burst into the skulls of the preoccupied with the running Spartans. The other ODS'Ts stood up as well, firing on the Brute that was too confused on which enemy to target. A flash of black and green had the Brute on the ground and putting a few rounds into its jugular. The firing stopped and

Suigetsu moaned. "Damn Spartans have all the fun," he grumbled while walking up to the small path of rock where the Spartans were.

"_Chief," _Miranda's voice echoed over the radios. "_I'm giving the Brutes all I've got. But this is a heavyweight fight. _Dawn's _only the tonnage. Find me a place to set her down. Over." _The radio crackled and hissed before static came over it.

The ODS Ts ran up to the Spartans that were waiting for them. When the group got up to them they all ran for a small hole in the side of the mountain. The inside was supported by thick slabs of metal and filled with Covenant weapon crates. A single door was in the center to the right of them as they all jumped down into the dark cave. The door brightened from red to green and parted for them to enter. They walked through the small hallway. Three doors were in the place. Two to the side and one in the back.

John could hear fighting on the other side of the far door so he walked towards that one. The others followed with their guns up just in case a Brute had cloaking tech with him. Once they got to the door it parted like the previous one. Sand and Marines was all they could see until a burning Longsword fighter went soaring past them in the distance. The Marine that was closest to them shook his head as he walked up to them. He had a gash on his head and was blinking away the sand and blood from his eyes as he spoke.

"They got our Pelican too, sir. Before we went down we spotted a good LZ. If we can get to our vehicles, we'll lead you to it." John looked back at his team as they all walked up beside him. The ODS Ts ran up to the Marines to check them over and share magazines clips while a few sneaked over to the edge to see what was down below.

The burning remains of a Pelican's cockpit lay buried underneath the sand with smoke still billowing out of its damaged engines that were connected. A Warthog that was missing its front tire was being inspected by Grunts while the Turret was being looked over by a Brute in blue armor. Another team of Brutes and Grunts watched over the Pelican.

After the group was finished handing ammo around they all lined up along the wall and took cover behind rocks. John gave them all quick nodes and they quickly opened fire on the Grunts first. When the Grunts went down the team focused their fire on the Brutes. The Brutes by that time had learned their locations and were firing back at them. Spike rounds punched through rocks and tore Marines apart. Isaribi took a spike round the shoulder that spun her around into the line of fire of the other Brute. They tore her apart with Spike rounds and she dropped dead with ten in her back. Tucker fell as well. One clean shot right into face through his faceplate. The remaining forces quickly managed to combine fire and take them down before two odd looking vehicles appeared.

They were made like old sleigh used to get across snowy plains or a desert. It was powered by a massive generator that more or so was built like the human plane engine that pulled air into it and gave them thrust. The thrust came out of four small ports: Two along the two side slabs of metal on the bottom and another set just in front of the pilot. It was mounted with a single plasma turret. All together that thing looked like it was just put together right on the

spot from table scraps or leftover wreckage from a recent crash.

Either way, it was a threat.

The eight Brutes all jumped up, the drivers hefting brute launchers and the riders and turret users hefting spike rifles. The Brutes took cover behind the vehicles and rockers as they opened fire on the team. Suigetsu took one round into the side but remained standing while firing. If the wound did anything to him but hurt it just made him scream louder at the opposing forces. He took down one Brute before dying by a brute shot that hit the side of boulder he was taking cover beside. The flying shrapnel tore into his side, along with Rex, a fellow ODST. Both went down.

John jumped down to the ground. He'd seen enough of their deaths. If the Brutes were so interested in killing anything it should be him; someone who could _actually_ take a beating.

He ran straight at them as he opened fire on them. Hanabi put one down with her sniper rifle while Tenten put another down. Sasuke and Neji put one down together with combined fire. Konohamaru and Haku both threw grenades behind a rock where the last of the Brutes were taking cover. Two of them jumped out while the remaining two remained where they were. Two thuds sounded in the distance. The others weren't certain if the two had survived but the other two that had jumped out of the way were sure as hell dead now. John stood over one and fired point blank into its jugular while the third was put down by a sniper shot.

John looked back at the rock where the last two Brutes were. One was clearly dead. He could see the other one.

A flash and grunt sounded behind the rock and appeared in front of him. The other Brute had jumped out of cover from behind the rock, its armor damaged so badly it was practically coming off as he jumped into the air. It came down on the Chief and began pummeling him into the ground before two tiny puffs sounded. The Brute paused for a moment before falling backwards. John quickly jumped up to his feet while looking around.

No more targets.

The others were soon beside him. "Mount up," he ordered hastily. Everyone jumped on a vehicle. The dead Marines would have to be left behind for now. Once they had a base of operation set up they could come back to get them. For now they'd just settle for taking their tags and ammo, which they had already done. The ODSTs jumped on the two Mongooses while the others took up the new rides. John jumped behind the drivers' seat of the thing. Its controls resembled the Choppers' but less refined for years of use.

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Naruto ducked under a sea of enemy fire. Unggoy. Nothing but hundreds of Unggoy was keeping him pinned down. Obviously the Brutes had wasted no time in letting the little bastards reproduce like mad. Most of them were so small that even though they could walk they probably didn't know what the hell they were doing. Besides the Grunts, only two Brutes watched over them as they fired on them.

Naruto was certain the two Brutes weren't very bright seeing as that they hadn't ordered them to flank yet and they certainly hadn't ordered them to toss grenades.

Naruto sighed inwardly. They had found two more ODSs. One of them was a bespectacled young man named Isaac that had patched Ryan up a little bit better but had still resorted to making him wear the panty liner until they got better medical equipment. Though he complained about still wearing the damn thing, he had to admit that it was doing its job and that he was still alive. He just didn't like wearing the damn thing. The other ODS was the older brother to Isaac. He was the sniper and was named Zackary, but Isaac called him Zack for short. Ryan called them Snipes and Patch. And like Donut they hated the nicknames.

Naruto put his head against the thick slab of metal that was protecting him from the sea of never ending plasma fire. He couldn't tell if it was warming up or not but he was sure as hell glad it wasn't just yet. He needed to keep their focus for just a bit longer. The only problem was that he wasn't doing too well at his part of the plan. The Unggoy were either properly trained or were really hyper and would lose focus on the task at hand which was always getting the other team spotted.

The plasma fire stopped and Naruto jumped up to fire a few rounds into them to get their attention again. They were focusing back on his team that was trying to get into flanking positions. The humans he could understand but the Sangheili he couldn't. They were the main ones getting spotted.

Naruto ducked back under the slab of metal as the green blobs began flying back at him. Naruto cursed them as one of them threw a plasma grenade straight at Donut. It landed directly in front of him and began to brighten right there at his feet. Donut visibly sighed. "Sh-" he vanished a cloud of smoke and thunder. Blobs of glassed sand smacked into Naruto's shields making his skin boil with blisters. He cursed inwardly.

Another plasma grenade was thrown but it was shot out of the air by Zack. "Shit! I think we made them mad!" He proclaimed. Naruto shot him an annoyed glance but couldn't help but agree. Zack looked up at the cliff where the others were. Plasma fire once more exploded towards the other team that was trying to get a better angle. "I gotta tell you. You suck as a commander." Zack informed Naruto. Naruto stood back up firing on the enemy to get their attention. He took out one of the two Jiralhanaes before taking cover again. "This is insane!"

A bolt of red plasma flew down on the enemy from the cliffs. The others were in position now. Naruto stood up as the enemy began focusing on them again. Zack followed soon after and both began tearing the enemy apart. Once the Unggoy were dealt with the remaining Jiralhanae went berserk and charged Naruto. A plasma bolt destroyed it heads before it could move three feet though. Naruto looked up to the cliff and waved his team down. The rocks moved and the others appeared.

"Well," Isaac began as he jumped down from his perch where he'd been. "I think that could have gone better." He grumbled as he helped Deidara down. Naruto snorted at him as he walked over to each of the

Unggoy and policed them with his katana. Once he was certain that they were in fact dead he turned back to Isaac as he finished checking Ryan over. He was complaining about dizziness to him. Isaac gave him some more adrenaline before looking the others over.

"We don't have time to dress their wounds," Rauk commented. "We must find the Map Room as ordered." Naruto was already walking away with his Shinobi team following him. The three Sangheili turned back to face the Humans that were grabbing plasma grenades from the dead Unggoy. He blinked once. "What are you doing?" Deidara looked up at him in confusion. Scavenging wasn't the Sangheili way. So to them it was wrong to take the weapons of the fallen. Humans on the other hand did it when necessary.

Zack shook his for a moment. He had forgotten they came from different worlds for a fraction of a second. He was still getting used to working with them. "When we are low on something we must scavenge what we need sometimes," he explained slowly. Rauk blinked once before shaking his head. "I'm sure you don't see it as the right thing and to be frank neither do I. But we must do what we must in order to survive. I'm sure you've seen that hundreds of times when you were fighting us?" Rauk nodded. He had in fact seen it done. He had seen them destroy their own ships when they were boarded and there was no hope of winning. He'd seen them abandon worlds for them to glass with humans still on it. So while he couldn't digest it or accept it, he could understand it. "Don't worry though. I think we got enough know to get us through the rest of this hell bent mission."

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"LZ's through the cave, sir!" Corporal Locker shouted as the combination of Brute Choppers, Prowlers, and Mongooses came to a stop beside them. "Watch yourself. Got Covenant Heavy armor," he added a moment later.

John nodded as he pushed forward on the controls of his Prowler. It was the only one left. The other Prowler had been destroyed, taking the Marines that had been riding on it with it. Hanabi was banging up from it but okay. She had been driving the other one when it suddenly exploded and was cut in half by a Brute Chopper. The Marines had become nothing but mulch for the desert sand. She would be okay just as soon as she was got some medical attention. They had also lost one of the Mongooses to the Chopper, taking the two ODSTs, Hana and Caboose, with it. The only two ODSTs left were Kimimaro and Tayuya now.

John drove straight out at the Wraith tank that was guarding the only visible way up to the two Anti-Air Wraiths that were helping the Banshees fight off the Hornets that were doing battle with them. Neji lined up the Brute working the turret of the Wraith tank and fired on it. Sasuke took aim with his SPKNr Missile and fired at it. The Covenant Tank turned to greet them and was greet by two explosive thuds that slammed into its prow. Its turret worker was killed by the first shot that slammed directly into its face, effectively jamming the mortar on top of its massive beetle like body. Tenten sniped out two Brutes that were making a run for better cover while they drove straight for the tank.

Two Ghosts being piloted by Grunts fell in behind them and were

stopped by Hanabi and her Chopper. They exploded into purple flames and debris that rained down on John when he did a U-turn to get away from the boosting tank. Tayuya let loose two missiles from her SPK Nr launcher that destroyed the front of it with ease thanks to the two blasts primer to her own. The Wraith tank shuddered and then fell apart before their eyes.

John pushed forward on his controls while giving his team a few green light signals. They got the message on what he was planning. He revved the engines as he broke away from the others that charged up the normal path. Sasuke fired his last missile at a sniper tower that took it out just as a Grunt began using the turret to stop them. It exploded into fiery bits that rained down and went back up in the Gravlift. John forced their ride onto the small swell of rocks that shielded them from enemy fire from both directions. They flew over the top of it and ran over one of the Brutes that were on top while coming down on a second. They all dismounted before they hit the ground.

Sasuke slammed back first into the ground but still raised his rifle from his position on the ground and killed two Grunts right off the bat. Tenten landed smack dab on the back of the Prowler somehow but managed to use her sniper rifle to take out one of the Brutes while weakening a second one for John to dispose of. Master Chief had been the only one to land on his feet and he was already running headlong into the bunker. Neji slammed down onto the ground and slid almost underneath their former ride but fired as he slid. He killed the other Brute on top of the bunker.

The Spartan IIIs were quickly on their feet just as a section of the rock bunker exploded outwards. Dust and debris clouded their vision for a moment before John walked out with scorch marks on his armor. Sasuke blinked once before looking back at the two Anti-Air Wraith tanks. Kimimaro was jamming a plasma grenade into the vent on the back after it had been hit by a high explosive while Hanabi was jacking the other one with the help of Konohamaru. They all tossed grenades into them before jumping off to watch them blow up.

With the threat no neutralized a Pelican appeared off by the ledge that overlooked the massive land below them. "_Commander," _Johnson's loud voice boomed over the radios. "_Bring her down!" _

"_Rodger that. Beginning my decent!" _

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Zing put his massive arms over his head in fear as the ceiling cracked, buckled and then fell down on him. A shadow appeared of him with a bigger shadow of it to block the falling debris from hitting him. He trembled in fear before looking up at his saviors. A human female with long purple hair, white clothing over a red and white kimono and hakama that he has seen his lord Naruto wear at times stood over him with a smile on her face. Above her was a Sangheili that had only the smallest of remains of the roof on his body. It quickly shook it off as the ship shuddered again.

"Are you alright," she spoke slowly. Zing blinked his tiny red eyes before nodding. He understood human language better than most of his kind. It was his duty to understand it and the sightings of all of their religious artifacts. He's rank was that of Deacon, which was

the highest rank an Unggoy like himself could attain, after all. It was his duty to know these things. Zing simply nodded through his pain.

The ceiling cried and groaned as the ship was hit again. "We must leave," the Sangheili hastily grabbed the young female and Zing in both arms and ran out of the hallways that Zing had been patrolling. The only reason he needed help was because one of the gas lines in the walls had exploded and took off one of his short stubby legs. He was so worried that he was going to die that he had never noticed them until it was nearly too late. He was happy that the female had decided to save his pitiful life. He would never forget her face so long as he lived.

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Rtas grunted as his ship was hit again. "Hit them again! And AGAIN! AND AGAIN," he ordered as another one of his ships was destroyed. _Crusade of Light_ had been destroyed which caused his ship to shutter. But it had taken out five of the Jiralhanae controlled cruisers before going down. But even its debris seemed to accept their noble name as it flew down into the path of plasma torpedoes and plasma lines to block them for the sake of their brethren that still lived and fought.

The ship rocked again as a plasma torpedo slammed into their weakened shields. "Shields are holding at eighty-four percent, Fleetmaster!" Sore shouted as sparks danced across his station. He closed his one good eye as the sparks increased for a moment. Sore's legs were healed now but with a damaged eye Naruto had ordered him to stay yet again. Sore didn't protest this time. Rtas was _kind _enough to give him a spot on the ship's bridge for this fight.

The ship shook once more as they flew under the remains of _Crusade of Light_. Debris bounced off their shields as they pushed through it. They pushed the largest piece straight for one of the last remaining Jiralhanae ships. Its lateral lines heated to a dull red making it look like an angry fish just before they were fired. The massive section of ship blocked most of the barrage while their shields took the rest without so much as, a shudder to the ship.

At the last second they slowed down and sent the massive chunk of debris flying straight at the ship. It crashed into the Jiralhanae ship, draining its shields to almost nothing. "FIRE!" Rtas screamed. Their heated lateral lines brightened to a dull red before being fired straight at the wounded ship. Plasma lines and torpedoes tore it apart and forced it into two pieces from the force of their attack. As the two halves of the ship began to drift down towards the instillation it exploded into fiery bits of metal and plasma that quickly evaporated upon reentry.

"Brilliant strategy, Fleetmaster!" Yin shouted happily.

Brilliant, Rtas thought about that one for a moment. _No. More like suicidal_, he concluded in thought. He wouldn't voice that thought for now. His mind was grabbed by the image of the _Dawn _taking a beating as it was targeted by a wounded Jiralhanae ship it had basically crippled on its own. "Move us to protect the human vessel!" He shouted. The ship moved without a reply from his warriors and flew towards the _Dawn _as more plasma torpedoes began streaking towards

it. _Shadow of Intent _turned sideways to block the shot as it flew straight of the tiny little Frigate. Rtas grunted as the ship shook again from the blow.

"Shots blocked successfully," Sore announced as he looked over the shield readings. "Shields are down to sixty percent."

"_Commander," _Johnson's loud voice boomed over the radios of _Shadow of Intent_. _"Bring her down!"_

"_Rodger that!" _Miranda's voice sounded over the radio a moment later. _"Beginning my decent," _she informed them. _"Shipmaster, can you cover us as we head down?"
>

"We shall," Rtas announced with pride in his voice. His crew didn't respond to this. As the _Dawn _broke formation to head to the instantiation a pair of Frigates moved towards them along with two cruisers. Rtas looked to Sore as he glanced at the NAV station. "Maneuver one two zero by two seven five," Rtas ordered.

"Coming about," Chichi answered, and the stars wheeled through the holographic view space. Chichi gawked at what his was planning. "Sir, that puts us directly in the line of the two frigates and cruisers fire projections! Are shield will not hold out against them!" Chichi wasn't sure what happened next. The ship shook but he found himself on the ground with a broken mandible and bleeding from it. He looked up at the person that had struck him when he became aware that was what happened. Xedrael stood above him and now sitting at his station that he once sat at. He had been disgraced. He knew it. And to make matters worse, the two humans stood beside him without glancing down at him. One of them, Hinata if he remembered her name, was helping an Unggoy Deacon stand.

He was shammed and he knew it.

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Naruto grimaced as another plasma bolt from a beam rifle flew over his head. For some reason they seem to have interest in one of two people at the moment. The first was obviously Naruto or as the Jiralhanae were calling the "Abomination" which Naruto happily accepted while cutting them to pieces when he could. The other one they were targeting was the unfortunate man named Tobi. Ryan seemed to have learned that if you mentioned that one of them had a hammer he'd go running right to where you pointed. Naruto would admit that he himself was fast, but Tobi was fast as hell when he wanted a hammer. And since he was so fast it made it hard for the snipers to get him. Had the snipers been the Kig-Yar then he might have been dead already. Luckily it was nothing but Jiralhanae working them at the moment.

Naruto looked to his left. Mikoto was beside him with one of her katanas out and shaking nervously. Tsume was beside her and flexing her claws in preparation to tear them apart. Naruto understood a lot about the human body, along with the female body. He also understood that when they reached their cycling period that other female would too. Before the mission it was revealed that Konan, Tsume, and Mikoto were on their cycle, or as Zabuzza had so kindly put it, the rags.

"I'm going to kill them," Tsume growled as another plasma bolt sizzled by them.

"Hammer!" Tobi exclaimed.

"I'm going to kill him too," Tsume added.

"No wait! Don't shoot Tobi! Tobi is a good boy!" Naruto blinked as he looked up just in time to see a black blur land down in front of them on its side and scrabble up between Naruto and Mikoto. It was Tobi and in his hands was in fact a Jiralhanae Hammer. Naruto looked over their cover for a brief second to see a hulking mass of flesh heading their way without a weapon in hand. It was dressed in Chieftain Armor and looking very angry. "Tobi is a good boy! Honest," Tobi exclaimed in fear.

"No one's going to kill you, Spike," Ryan told him from his cover behind a broken down ghost. Naruto sent him a glare. Naruto would kill him if he didn't stop speaking in third person. That was just getting annoying at this point. The plasma firing stopped. Ryan looked up at the massive set of rocks and metal where their snipers were at. Ahiel, Konan, and Zack all poked their heads out with their guns up. After two seconds of no one firing, having something return fire, or one of them go down, the others quickly stood back up to finish checking out what they'd found.

The team walked up to the edge of a cliff to see a giant structure of metal by a large body of water that turned into a large waterfall. The metal structure looked like a giant smoke stack that had two support beams running from opposite ends to hold it up. One of them was narrow and thin while the other was large and multilayered. A set of long ramps extended to the only visible door from their angle. The only thing scary about it was the heavy armor patrolling it. Naruto counted at least ten Wraith Tanks with six Jiralhanae Choppers and six Ghosts. Naruto knew it would be tough to get by.

Ryan shook his head as he brought his hand up to his head where his earpiece was. "Johnson, we found something on the other side of the wall." Ryan began giving a description of what they found to him before he got a reply back.

"_Understood," _Johnson sounded cocky for some reason. "_Stay where you are. We'll come pick you up as soon as we can. Anything of major interest we need to know about?"_

"They have lots of heavy armor over here, sir," Donut answered. "We'll hang tight until you arrive."

"_Understood," _Johnson replied before they dropped the chatter.

"Stay put," Naruto asked.

"Yeah," Ryan smiled at Naruto clear displeasure. "We're staying right here until we get a flight down there. There's no way in hell we can climb down without being seen." The ground rumbled just as he finished and they all turned to see a Scarab turning to face them.

Naruto blinked up at it as it charged its main weapon. "Still wanna stay right here?" Ryan was already running with his ODSs before Naruto could even ask.

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"Uh... is the _Dawn _rated for Atmosphere?" Tayuya suddenly asked as everyone took shelter in the rock bunker. Good question considering that it was about to do just that.

"I guess we're going to find out!" Kimimaro shouted over the high winds that began to pick up as a small dot began flying towards them. "Hey, take cover! Her she comes!" Those that were still outside the bunker quickly jumped into the bunker as the _Dawn _came down to a hover above them. The Frigate came to a slow stop before coming to a complete stop to hover over them all. It was covered with burns from plasma fire and its reentry. Some of its sections were breached and mangled with burnt bodies that had gotten stuck when that part of the ship depressurized from the holes in them.

"_Thanks, Chief. We weren't going to last much longer up there. Come to the back of the Frigate." _She ordered. John and Co walked out of their cover while the Tayuya and Kimimaro were ordered to load up into the Pelican with Johnson. _"Johnson! Did the Elites find anything?" _

"_A structure on the far side of the wall, Ma'am," _He informed her._
"But it's surrounded by Brute Heavy Armor." _

"_Don't worry. I have a plan. If we can't go over the wall then we'll just go right through it. Chief, take one of the tanks." _She ordered as the three Scorpion class tanks rolled out off their ramps from the hanger bay of the ship. A few Warthogs also dismounted as well while more Marines jumped out of the back of Johnson's Pelican. And despite the sand storm that was kicked up from the arrival of the _Dawn_ it was pretty easy to see that they were ready to give the Covenant an ass whooping. _"Find any lock doors; Spark will be _happy _to pry them open for you." _

At that moment Spark appeared beside a Scorpion tank while John walked up to it. It already had a driver but he left the hatch open so he could easily get out if required. "I will certainly try my best. Though I am unfamiliar with this facility," Spark admitted warily.

"_Alright then, mount up. Let's roll." _Johnson's Pelican gained altitude for a brief moment before Hanabi, Tenten, and Neji were ordered to stay and help secure the _Dawn_. They quickly loaded up and gave thanks to Johnson for all his _support _during their mission thus far.

24. Chapter 24

Chapter 24

The ground detonated beneath his feet and sent him flying head over heels until he landed square on his back looking up at the large Scarab that was following them. Ryan stared it down without an ounce of fear as it walked right over him without pausing to step on him.

As soon as it passed him up Ryan was back on his feet with a shotgun in hand. He pointed it at the ass end of the mobile tank as it crawled up on the side of the mountain of metal and rock to get a better aim at the fleeing ODSTs and Elites.

"Okay," he muttered. "We're in trouble." The cannon opened up and began charging before firing on the team. "Yeah we really are screwed." Ryan rushed back to the others as fast as he could.

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Zack jumped into the dark cave as the plasma from the Scarab began glassing the sand near his feet. He rolled into the cave and came up to his feet with his sniper rifle aimed at one of the "legs" of the walking tank. He kept his gaze focused through the oracle scope as the massive piece of metal that was its "leg" attempted to claw him out. It was futile though as he was too far inside the cave.

It was long after that the others jumped in as well. Well the Elites didn't jump in. Ryan was the last one to enter and as always he entered like he owned the place. His shotgun on his shoulder, that "I am a badass and I know it" walk, and a bored expression that told them they were all pussies for jumping in on his face. Yep, for someone who five minutes after seeing the damn thing was screaming for his mommy to be doing this it was clear to everyone just how sarcastic and nuts Ryan was.

"Okay, ladies," Ryan said, getting their attention in the most unfriendly of ways, "I want Spike to run around and get its attention. Snipes, you take out anyone of that damn thing that you can see. Chick, I need you to blow that thing to hell. Holyman, make everyone religious. Patch, prepare to give everyone medical attention. Freak squad, I need you to run around with Spike and scream like women. Do you all understand me?" He got nothing but blank stares from everyone. "I'll be in the cave giving tactical data to you all. So let's go."

Naruto rolled his eyes while grabbing Ryan by the collar of his vest and slammed him back first into the cave wall. "No one orders my team around," Naruto said angrily as he dropped him to the ground. Ryan stood back up with his shotgun in hand. He was ready for a fight.

"Damn," a gruff voice began. Everyone turned around to see an ODST resting up against the rock wall with an oddly twisted leg and a small pool of blood lying around it. Naruto blinked once as Isaac ran up to him with a medical kit already out. "I thought I'd never see anyone again. I'm happy as hell to see you guys." He spoke with a winded voice.

"Gus," Zack walked up to the new ODST as he tore his helmet off. His sandy blond hair was filled with patches of blood where he had gashed his head. His left eye was swollen shut leaving only his right eye visible. It was a light blue color. Clef chin and pudgy face made him look like a child for a man that was only in his early twenties. "We thought you were dead?"

"I got lucky."

"Yeah," Isaac looked him over. A broken leg at the knee, possible even a few hairline fractures, a concussion, maybe even damage to his spinal cord and he was going to say he was lucky. He was lucky in his own right mind to have survived like them, but his body made it seem like his luck was nothing short of just a miracle instead. Still Isaac wouldn't call it false since he was still alive. "You were always the one with all the luck."

"And the girls!"

"Don't remind us," Zack snapped.

"_The Scarab is pulling back," _Konan told them over the radio. Naruto blinked. When had he ordered her to stay outside to watch the thing? He knew he hadn't done it, so that only left her to giving the orders. Meaning she took it upon herself to risk death just to watch it. Brave. Stupid. And yet the most honorable thing that any Sangheili warrior would have done. She was being more of a Sangheili warrior each day he knew her. She would be commended for her actions when Naruto took up his own land.

"Understood," The former Jinchuuriki told her. "We're leaving the area. The Scarab has passed us by." Naruto informed his team. The ODSs looked happy to hear that. Tobi however quickly ran outside and shouted at the retreating Scarab though it didn't turn around to kill him.

"Tobi could have kicked your ass! Tobi is I, The Vehicle Destroyer!" Naruto blinked as Tobi continued his rant about how he would have kicked its ass until Deidara got really annoyed and took a crack-shot at him which resulted in a nothing more than a bruised ass. Tobi fell on his ass when the round dug its way into the ground between his legs. "Tobi is a good boy!"

"Tobi is fixing to be a "Dead Boy" if he doesn't shut up!" Deidara screamed. Naruto looked between the two before shrugging his shoulders and walking out. His team followed him while the ODSs watched the bickering between Deidara and Tobi with interest.

"Scarab," Gus asked. There was a hint of joy right there. "Why didn't you tell me there was one out there? I placed Lotus Anti-Tank mines and other fun surprises out there just in case I passed out again." Isaac dismissed his comments as he began using what he could to patch his twin brother up.

_Idiots, _Naruto thought as he came to a stop beside Konan. "When did I give you orders to watch its movements?" Konan glanced at him with a small amount of interest before shrugging her shoulders. Naruto sighed as the bickering got louder. "Listen, while I am in command I want to be informed on everything you or anyone else does. One slip up could end up costing us our lives." The bickering got louder and Naruto was wincing in anger as he contemplated on the idea of turning around to kill them. "You have embraced the ways of the Sangheili as I have. To me you are my sisters and brothers now. We are equals and I will treat you as such." A gun went off and Tobi began screaming. Naruto closed his eyes as the bickering once again got louder with Ryan jumping in shouting off odd names at both of them. "I just want to get through this so I can return home to Sanghelios with father and the others. That's all. And I want you all to return with me

alive. You understand don't you?" A tracer round pinged off the rock beside Naruto's foot. _That's it!_

Plasma fire erupted between Naruto's team and the ODSs. Naruto turned to face the threat: Four Ghosts that were piloted by Unggoy. Without a second thought he jumped straight at them and hurled his oversized sword at the first Ghost. The plasma blade that lined it cut the entire Ghost in half and the Unggoy along with it. Naruto landed down in front of the massive blade. _"Hey! How does .90 millimeters in Tungsten strike you?" _Someone shouted over the radio. Naruto pulled his sword out of the ground and threw it at the side of another Ghost. It exploded on impact when the energy blade ignited the liquid inside the fuel-cells. The sword was broken by the blast and sent flying into one of the other Unggoy that piloted another Ghost. Naruto, still in a mindless rage, ran straight at the other Ghost as it turned straight into a wall with its boosters still on. The cowering Unggoy was cut in half with its ride when Naruto dragged his energy scythe from one end to the other. _"Tank beats Ghost!" _Someone cheered.

Ryan blinked as Naruto finished destroying the Ghost that was in the wall before pressing his chin on the COM. "That Foxboy just took down four of those little bastards with a massive sword and a scythe, ladies. Pick it up!"

"Hunters!" Zack shouted as he sighted one down. A loud roar of anger sounded from where Naruto was just before they fired at him. Naruto blurred right towards them. The first one swung its shield at him but Naruto was able to slide right under it and grab hold of it with his energy scythe at the gut. He pulled once on the weapon and the super heated energy blade melted him in half. Naruto swung at the other one but it used its shield to block it. Naruto roared in anger as he let the burning energy slowly melt into the thick armor. When the blade began to burn its skin it yanked its arm back, forcing the thin bar to slip from Naruto's hand. In a blur of motion Naruto unsheathed both energy blades from his shoulders and sliced it half. Zack dropped his rifle down just a bit. "Damn!"

"_Tank beats Hunters!" _

"Foxman just took out a pair by himself! Step it up!" Plasma fire rained down from the sky as a Phantom appeared in the sky. It lowered down into the valley of rock that they had been trapped in and began unloaded Jiralhanae. _Let's see him take that out! _"Phantom!" Naruto was almost struck by one of the blobs of plasma as he glared up at the Phantom. It was still firing at him. Without even a second thought he ran for the rock walls while dodging the plasma. Naruto jumped and dodged each shot until he reached the valley walls which he began to run along by using the rocks as stepping stones until he was higher than the Phantom. _No. _Naruto jumped on top of the thing while screaming at it as he drove his energy blades into the prow of it. It didn't take it long to heat up from the combined force of the plasma blades. _No. No. No. _

"DIE!" Naruto began dragging the blades along the cockpit section of it until he formed a large X in the front of it. He had killed the pilot inside it and it was struggling to stay in one position before taking a nosedive to the ground. It exploded into fiery bits of purple flames and metal. The falling debris crushed the charging Jiralhanae as they ran at them. Naruto dropped down in front of his

team that had run up to help him. Naruto was hunched over and breathing loudly with a snarl to it.

"_Tank beats everything! Oh man, I could do this all day!" _

"That son of bitch Foxman just took out a fucking Phantom! By himself! With two swords!" Ryan screamed so loud that an echo sounded from around them. Naruto glared at him from inside his helmet but said nothing. He knew he'd just mocked him in every way possible. Hell, the other Sangheili to take out anything like that had been Shirley a former Arbiter who was so revered in battle that not even the mightiest of Shipmasters and Zealots could stand beside him. The ground rumbled and everyone looked up to see the Scarab that had been chasing them come to a stop at the top of the valley. Ryan smiled a bit as he turned to face Naruto. "Let's see you take that, bitch!"

The Scarab fired but the blast of plasma soared over their heads. Naruto began breathing heavily before throwing his head back to roar in anger. The former Jinchuuriki charged the massive walking tank as he stowed away his energy swords for a moment. He tore his energy scythe out of the Lekgolo shield without breaking stride. The Jiralhanae, Unggoy, and Kig-Yar that were on top of the Scarab fired down on him as he ran. This only forced him to run faster.

Naruto used the burning debris of the Phantom and the valley walls to jump to the leg of the "knee" of the Scarab and cling to it. Without pausing he jumped from the knee to the top of the Scarab's "Leg" and then straight to the first Jiralhanae that greeted him. Naruto swung his scythe straight at its ugly face and cut its head off. The Kig-Yar began to turn and run only to get shot in the back by Konan and Ahiel. The Unggoy jumped off the Scarab in fear and quickly realized that it was a long way down. Those that survived were the unlucky ones to get police rounds in the head by an off-shot Zabuza and Tobi.

In a matter of minutes the top of the Scarab was cleaned of enemies. A brute shot round flew past Naruto's visor making him roar in fury as he charged the hiding Jiralhanae that cowered in the lower decks of the Scarab. The Sangheili's only Kitsune warrior tackled one to the far end of the purple walls inside the Scarab and crushed its skull with a single punch. He tossed the body back at the other four that hefted only spike rifles. Naruto blurred right at them and cut the first one apart before grabbing the second and smashing him into the ground. The other two backed up towards a large force field that kept the cockpit shielded from those that would try to jack the Scarab. One of them bumped into it and quickly opened the shield up. Its buddy looked back in horror at his friend's actions before Naruto tackled him straight into the place. The Sangheili Kitsune warrior drove his energy claws straight into its face before standing up to slowly walk over to the other horrified Jiralhanae.

"Please!" Naruto cut his head off before he could finish.

Naruto huffed with anger before noticing where he was. A sly grin appeared on his face as he walked up to the controls where two Jiralhanae Captains focused on trying to hit Naruto's team. With a simply swing he decapitated the two of them and took command of the Scarab. Naruto forced the machine to lower down so the others could get on. Seeing Ryan gasping suddenly made him remember his words

earlier. "I took it, Mr. Maxi Pad."

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"You ever wonder what's up there," Kelly looked at John. The two of them were lying in the tall weeds back on Reach. The stars were out and illuminating the night with the twinkles of starlight. It would have been pitch black had the stars not been out. The two of them along with the other Spartan candidates had managed to outwit CO Mendez when he sabotaged their air tanks during their underwater training. They snuck away with a few of his and managed to swim to a small island just a few miles away from the Barracks they were trained at. So until they found them it was just fun in the sun with no training and no evil CO Mendez to drill them into the ground.

"Like what?"

"That there's someone up there wondering what is like here?"

"I guess. Do you think we'll ever meet them?"

"I hope so. Don't you?" John looked over at her and found a green helmet sitting in her place. Explosions knocked him back to reality. It had been a dream. He could see smoke trails from the plasma fire and tank rounds. He raised his hands to look at them. Good. He was still alive. He could also feel pain which was also another good thing.

**Do you think we'll ever meet them?** John put his helmet back on as Kelly's words echoed through his mind. He dropped to one knee and then one hand as the force of the blast he'd suffered just moments ago took firm hold of his body. He looked around only to find the remains of driver and passengers in the burning remains of the Warthog they'd been in.

Master Chief found his assault rifle and quickly put on his back as his helmets' speaks and radio began to crackle and pop. _"Marines! Fall back now!"_

"_Any sign on the Chief?" _It was Johnson.

"_Negative, sir. I think we lost him!" _Reynolds?

John gasped as the last of his air compressed from his lungs before noticing that a single plasma mortar was heading straight for him. He slowly reached behind his back to pull out the small little handheld "bubble shield" before thumbing it. "Not yet." He replied calmly as he threw the device into the sand. It brightened and expanded into a perfect bubble of energy that blocked the explosion of the plasma mortar blast. John shielded his face with his arm to keep him from staring straight into white hot sun of energy when it hit. He held his pistol at the moment.

As the sand hissed and crackled from being turned to glass the barrier failed and dropped. John looked up in a snap and ran straight past the Covenant tanks that were now burning husks of metal. He thought he saw Sasuke and Haku on the Gauss Warthog but he wasn't sure. He only caught them for the faintest of moments. A normal human wouldn't have seen them. But he saw them and he still wasn't certain

on who it was that was driving it.

John ran straight up the ledge of rock as he switched from his pistol to his rifle. The Spartan II jumped at the last second and saw four Brutes hefting fuel rods. He placed his boot out front as he came down on the head of the first one. Weighing in at more than a ton had a few advantages and one of them was the ability to step on something it was often crushed under his weight. In this case a Brute head and its helmet. It didn't stand a chance.

John came to a dead stop as he raised his rifle into the face of the Brute to his right. He fired into its face. The bullets chipped away at its armor before going through its eyes and getting lost in its brains. It still didn't register its death for two seconds. In those two seconds it managed to knock his gun away and then collapse over dead. John spun with the force of his arm as his gun went flying. He ended up with his back against the large belly of the Brute to his left. He slammed his elbow into its face four times before being able to shatter its helmet and stun it. John reached up with both hands to target the other Brute that watched in wonder with the fuel rod. He fired three times. The first round melted its shields. The second round melted its body. And the third round was just for good measure. John spun around and broke the neck of the Brute before the ground shook beneath his feet.

"_Scarabs back!" _Haku shouted over the radios. John could just barely see the dust trail of their Warthog as it raced down to where he was. Sasuke was driving like a Spartan bent on running something over. "_This time it means business!" _

"_Bravo flank and cover," _Reynolds shouted. "_I want everyone supporting the Chief. He'll take it down." _

Scorpion tanks with Gauss and Chain-gun mounted Warthogs followed them and pushed forward. The one Gauss Hog drove straight towards John though. He moved towards the right of the thing as it began to slow down for only a fraction of a second. In that second of a window John was able to jump into the passenger side seat that was none existent now. John didn't care. With a Scarab here the only way to beat it was to move fast and punch hard.

Sasuke pressed down on the gas so hard that the pedal seemed to get a bit flatter as they pulled a U-turn before driving around the Scorpion tanks. John glanced at Sasuke before suffering through another hard turn that ended with them racing towards the small ramp-like structure in the middle of the desert world. The Scarab was walking towards the tanks and Hogs that were in that area since they were scattered and in disarray for the moment. Sasuke floored it onto the ramp, pushing the vehicle to its breaking point with three one ton armored Spartans at its crew. It was maxing out at forty kilometers an hour when it hit the ramp. The Brutes on top of the Scarab pointed at it as it came down. They had hoped that Grunts would open fire on them.

Not the case.

The Warthog came crashing down on them, smashing the Brute that had been barking out orders a moment ago. The team dismounted quickly and ran straight into the heart of the Scarab. They dodged, snapped necks and limbs, and with a few well placed plasma and spike grenades, blew

the hell out of everything until they were at the core of the Scarab. Glowing bright blue with a shield and four long metal organic looking pipes the thing already looked slightly damaged.

Sasuke ran up to the thing with a satchel charge. It was his last one. He'd been forced to use a few when he lost his tank. He wasn't happy to lose it. He stuck the charge to the Scarab and gave his team the green light before jumping off of the thing with the others. They slammed into the ground just as the Scarab turned to face them. Sasuke raised the detonator and pressed it. A loud _thud _echoed from the ass end of the Scarab. It wobbled as its cannon began to charge. Just as it began to finish the charge to fire it collapsed to the ground and exploded into fiery bits of plasma and metal.

"_Not bad, Spartan," _Rtas's voice sounded over his radios. "_I saw that explosion from orbit. Truth's fleet lies in ruins. Find where the liar hides' so I may place my boot between his gums!" _

"_We'll know soon enough, Shipmaster." _

Plasma fire forced the team to split up. They looked up at the spire that they had to run up. It was loaded with Covenant forces. Jackals with beam rifles sat at the top of it with capable cover to shield them from enemy fire. Brutes and Grunts were most likely hiding within the thing as well. "_Infantry on the spire," _Johnson shouted. "_Mop 'em up!" _

The three Spartans ran straight up the spire as fast as they could. They dodged, snapped limbs and necks, and with captured weapons shredded the enemy apart until the spire ran with a dark red and blue blood and gore. By the time they were at the top they found a Pelican with the Arbiter just jumping out and Spark working on the door in the back. Sasuke nodded to the two Marines that jumped out with grins on their faces.

"Well done, Spartans!" Thel congratulated as he walked up to Spark with the others.

Johnson lit his cigar as he shook his head. He needed a smoke right now. As he went to light it he noticed the bodies shake just a bit. His first thought was the Flood, but that couldn't be. He hadn't seen them yet. So it couldn't be them. His second thought was that it wasn't dead. But he pushed that one aside when he noticed it had no head. The shaking got worse and as he looked up a giant metal leg came down right in front of the team as the doors open. Everyone jumped in and rolled while bringing their guns up to the ass end of the thing as it walked towards the ocean.

"Where the hell did that thing come from?!" Johnson shouted.

"No no no no no no no no no no no no no no no nooooooooooooooooo!" Johnson looked up as a few blurs came crashing down in front of the others. John's finger twitched on the trigger before he lowered his gun. ODSTs and Naruto's team stood before them. Each ODST was being carried by one of the Elites or armored Shinobi warriors. The one with a maxi pad stuck to his face punched the person holding him. "You son of a bitch! You did that on purpose!" He punched him again as he let him go. "Foxboy, you do that shit again and I will kick your ass!"

Foxboy, Thel thought for a moment. He saw the tail and then realized it was Naruto. He wouldn't say anything but he did find it disrespectful to Naruto.

"Whatever, Mr. Maxi Pad," Naruto snapped back.

"Nice to see you guys too," Johnson entered. "Now get your pretty asses on the bird before we leave you here." The ODS'Ts grumbled as they did before the sound of the Scarab walking into the wall got their attention.

"Oh shit I forgot to set the timer!" Isaac spoke up. Blowing up shit wasn't his forte. He could kill things with a gun and was a good medic. But when it came to blowing things up ODS'T style he always came up short. Konan raised her sniper rifle and fired a single shot. The charges that had been placed at the core went off in a flash of light and thunder that took the whole thing down when the reactor redlined. "That works tooâ€¦ I guess."

The ODS'Ts all jumped into the Pelican, Ryan being the last one on the bird. He was quickly spun around so Johnson could look at his face. "Son," he drawled out. "Why do you have a maxi pad stuck to yo' face?"

Ryan blinked. "Well _dad _I got shot and Chick didn't have any bandages other than her maxi pad. So they stuck it on my face," Ryan told him with all the sarcasm he could muster while hiding his anger. The Marines at the door were laughing at him and he was certain that the Spartans and that freak the Arbiter was laughing too. Johnson shook his head. "Sir, shut up!" Johnson broke down laughing at that point as the ramp closed and took them away.

Naruto shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the opened door and the corridors. He already had a bad feeling about it. Spark came up to him after surveying the team. He shook his body like it was his own head while speaking. "I am sorry, Reclaimers and Meddlers, but I am afraid that there is simply not enough room for us all to move safely though the complex. I am sorry." He told them glumly. Naruto was already ahead of him and watched as a Phantom appeared.

"You will be taking the Phantom back to the _Shadow of Intent,_" he explained. "Thel and I shall press forward with the Humans. We can take it from here." They looked at each other for a moment before nodding. Leaving him behind like this wasn't something they wanted to do but orders were orders. After watching him take down a Phantom they had no doubt that he was strong. But for all his strength and confidence he was sure as hell protective.

(-)

Yugito finished patching up a Sangheili warrior with Hinata by her side. Yugito, for all he destructive power as both a Jinchuuriki and as a Spartan, she had very delicate hands that were very careful with every wrap she did on the injured Sangheili warriors' arm. Hinata had just finished patching up the other wounded Unggoy that both stared and thanked her for her healing hands. She was very careful with them, not at all like the Huragok when they were in a rush to heal them or just didn't care. But she took her time. She cleaned the wounds. She sewed them up if they needed it. And she always seemed to worry when one of them began crying in pain from her movements. She

was a Goddess to them.

The doors hissed open and the ODS'Ts that got stuck with Naruto came in along with Naruto's team. Gus was placed on the table in an unconscious state while Ryan was forced to stand up against the wall. Hinata blinked. Isaac walked over to her after making sure that Gus wasn't going to roll over and fall to the ground. "The _Dawn _is overloaded with wounded. The Shipmaster agreed to let us come here for medical treatment so long as we didn't do anything to disturb the peace." Hinata began laughing. Isaac turned to where she was looking and started chuckling again. "Yeahâ€| uhâ€| it was some chick named Konan that put it on him. It worked."

"I think he deserved it," Konan put in as she leaned against the wall. Being told to stay in the medical bay to watch over them wasn't the most thrilling thing she had in mind now.

"I can see that."

"Shut up." Ryan hissed before falling over. Hinata shook her head at his limp body.

(-)

Thel and Naruto watched the patrolling Unggoy like a hawk as Naruto snuck up to him. The Unggoy came to a quick halt and sniffed the air. Naruto wrapped his arms around its neck and wrenched it up with a _pop_. Its lifeless body dropped to the ground unceremoniously as he ran up to the door on the bottom.

He knew if he got too close it would open up. The question was how far out did the proximity go?

Thel joined him on the bottom while the Spartans and two Marines waited to move up. Spark was hovering around them but always staying between the two teams.

The Humans pressed forward first. Their door open when they got just a few feet away from it and they found a golden armored Brute staring straight at them. It hadn't roared or anything until John shot at it. His rounds sputtered against the shields until the combined fire from the Marines and other two Spartan dropped him right there before he could fire five rounds.

The sound of the gunfire woke the sleeping Grunts below them that were guarding a punch of Covenant energy containers. Konohamaru simply tossed a grenade down to one of the stacks and watched purple fire consume most if not all of them. Those that didn't die by the flames or the blast ran and crawled around, trying desperately to get away from their attackers. When they got to the door they found the Arbiter and Abomination with their weapons drawn. Naruto walked around them just stabbing them in their hard skulls while Thel just shot each one in the head once.

"Come," Spark requested with urgency as he hovered near another door on the bottom that was nestled in the shadows of the walkway over it. "What you seek is just below." The Spartans dropped down behind the two warriors while the Marines had to run down the walkway to get to them.

Naruto was the first to step through the door. The room was made entirely out of glass it seemed. Thick slabs of metal and glass served as the floor while the rest of it was clear glass that was covered with ruins of the Forerunners. Artificial light blinked on as they walked down the steep ramp until coming to a small section that turned around and went down further like a flight of stairs. The door down at the bottom lit up. Naruto quickly jumped back behind the slab of metal at the turn while motioning for the others to stop.

"You bastards! Keep it down up there!" A Brute yelled.

Naruto blinked. The door hissed shut. "Must be lunch time for them," Corporal Parker muttered.

"If that is the case," Thel began. "Then I fear they are eating your brethren."

"Then let's get in there." John checked his ammo before giving them all nods. Naruto grinned as he drew both of his katanas. "Let's go!" They rushed the door.

The minute the door opened they were firing on them. The Brutes all jumped up as soon as the one closest to the door fell over dead from having his head torn off. The Brutes all hefted brute launchers and spike rifles. John did a quick scan of the room they were in. There were two doors in front of them following the paths in front. The middle of the room gave them ample cover but the side of the room was hollowed out with better cover that was being taken up by Jackals with shields and carbines.

John jumped in the other part of the room where the Jackals were. They squawked angrily at him as they raised their plasma pistols towards him. John ran up to the first one and kicked it in the side of its odd head. The head exploded when it met his iron boot and slumped over dead after making a picture with its blood on the wall. John spun with his kick and raised his rifle to the face of the second Jackal. He fire at it. It dove for cover but John clipped it three times in the side. He quickly ran up to it and over it as he ran for the next enemy. He made certain he crushed the head as he did though.

Haku beat him to it though. The Spartan III jumped right over the Brute while doing an aerial over it while firing into its collar bones and neck. With its shields already damaged and its armor cracked it worked on stunning the tall beast. Haku dropped down to the ground and wrapped his arms around the massive creature and spun to put it right in front of its Chieftain. The Chieftain had already swung its bladed brute shot when its comrade was placed in front of him. The Brute head fell off and rolled along the ground as the body dropped. Haku dropped to knees and fired into the belly of the Brute with John firing on its face. With the combined fire its shields' failed and its armor gave 'way to the force of their rounds. It dropped backwards dead.

Konohamaru and Sasuke jumped onto the chests of the two Brutes in front of them. With their massive weight now at a ton they were able to easily knock them to the ground while firing into the one that had been behind them. The two stepped on the heads of those that they had pinned down, squashing their brains all over the floor. The Brute that they had been firing at roared at them before a sword appeared

through its chest. Naruto appeared from behind its large body and kicked it off his weapon.

Thel ducked under a wide swing and stabbed the Jiralhanae in the back with his energy sword. Two more came at him from behind. He spun low to the ground with his sword out. He cut their feet off which made them topple over and into his sword for a second time that passed through their throats. Their headless bodies crashed to the ground with a loud _crunch_.

The two teams linked back up, both looking pleased with the gore around them. _"We got more than them," _Sasuke told Haku over the radio.

Haku said nothing as he pressed forward into yet another hallway. Spark hurried past them and opened the door while humming. They walked out onto a large ledge that had two wings circle around nothing but empty air. John's guts told him that the small little holographic panel would bring something up that would tell him where they were and what they were now on. And he also had a feeling that the center would be taken up by it.

"The Cartographer," Spark sang happily. "Come. It awaits your approval." John scrutinized the fact that he was the one to always activate odd objects but this time he didn't want to complain about it. He had just groan used to it over the last few odd trips into space. Still, he did as he was told.

He placed his hand on the biometric reader of the holographic panel. Stars wheeled into view and then retreated as planets, comets, and stars flew by them. Sasuke looked around as he noticed burning Covenant ships in one area and UNSC Cruisers and Destroyers in others. Haku and Konohamaru both noticed White Dwarf Stars that were slowly crumbling away. When the stars stopped moving John noticed what they were looking at. "That'sâ€| our galaxy? We're beyond the rim?"

Spark slowly turned around. "Two to the eighteen million light-years from the galactic center to be precise," Spark replied as he wirelessly zoomed in on an image that was just a tiny dot on the holographic image. It magnified into a large structure of some kind. It looked like a flower with large petals and smaller ones in between them. Land and oceans covered each petal in various ways with extended cloud cover. In the center was a planet, making the structure seem more like a sunflower than anything else.

John shook his head at it. "What is this place?"

"The Ark," 314 replied with a bit of hesitation.

"Thisâ€| is the Ark?" John looked back at the image. Thel was walking around the left wing. Naruto had already gone off to the right wing to get a better look at something. Sasuke, Haku, and Konohamaru just stared at it wonder.

Spark began moving up towards the planet that lay at the heart of the instillation. "I'd always assumed that it was part of a shield instillation. But it seems I was mistaken."

"Tch. That's a first," John muttered under his breath.

Spark took pride in a lot of things but being wrong about this he would let all things slip. "Not at all," he replied politely. "While I had a complete understand Instillation 04, my makers wisely limited my knowledge of all other strategic facilities. Compartmentalization. In case I was ever captured by the Flood."

"Can you tell me where we are exactly?"

Spark looked down at the map for a moment before highlighting a small section near the edge of one of the petals. "Here."

"And Truth?"

"Near one of the Ark's super aluminum communication arrays I am afraid," he pointed at another section on the same petal but further away. John's inside twisted. Even though it looked like mere inches he knew that was well within hundreds of miles, thousands even. "How unfortunate. The Meddler has triggered a barrier around the Arks' core." Spark missed the two Banshees that flew by. Thel and John didn't miss them and quickly began moving towards the ends of both wings. Naruto noticed them as well and was slowly reaching for his katanas while the other Spartans moved into the shadows of building. "The barrier will be difficult to disable. How odd that my makers would place such an incomprehensible defense around a single," Spark paused and began moving closer to the ring around the planet. "Oh my, "

"What is it?!"

"PHANTOM!" Thel shouted.

John slammed his back into the pillar as he called out to Spark. "Spark! Move!" 314 shook his head as he noticed the Phantom slowly coming towards them. He hadn't been paying attention and looked quickly to find John. When he did, he flew right up to him like a child with a bad secret to tell someone.

"We must get past the barrier! Or the Meddler will destroy it all!" John liked the idea of destroying everything. Spartan was notorious for leaving nothing but a swash of destruction when they fought. To them their next resupply was their next victory. Vehicles were included in this. Hell even a few of the Spartans had been waiting to be given the order to blow up a planet. John still held the title for biggest thing destroyed: Instillation 04. But if Truth was going to destroy something it would be bad for them not him.

John's radio hissed and popped before Johnson's voice came over it. _"Chief, got a whole mess of hostel air inbound! Head back inside while we mop 'em up!" _

John watched the Phantom for a moment before making a break for the door just a Banshee began flying towards them. "Follow the Oracle, Spartan. We will help your Sergeant clear the skies," Thel told him while snapping the neck of the Jiralhanae that had been piloting the Banshee. John looked back one last time to see Thel heading over the Phantom as it began explode. On the wing was Naruto holding on by one hand and energy sword in the other hand.

Thel blinked as he looked at the onslaught of the human fighters

called Hornets and the Jiralhanae controlled Banshees. Naruto stared each of the crafts down with fury in his eyes. Naruto finally stopped glaring at the enemy long enough to notice that Thel was heading for a smaller section of the fight. "I don't suppose you have a plan, Thel?" Naruto got silence back as a result. "Right then," he muttered. "Let's do this my way!" Naruto jumped off the side of the Banshee and soared down towards another Banshee.

The banked over just enough to watch Naruto's fall. _Your way is something not even I would dare try_, he thought as he flew into the fray.

Naruto put his legs out front and brought his arms up as the Banshee got closer to him. Just seconds before he hit it he reached out and grabbed the side of the cockpit while taking out a wing that sent it into a spin towards the ocean. Naruto tightened his grip on his hold while bringing his legs up to the belly of the fighter. He pushed off and reached up towards another one. He snagged the bottom of its left fin as it began turning towards another fighter. The young warrior grabbed his energy sword and stabbed the belly of the craft. A painful cry echoed from inside the fighter before all fell silent. Blood dripped from the cracks in the fighter before it began to dip down towards the ocean.

Another Banshee was underneath him and ready for him to land on. He came down on the top of its tear drop shaped prow and with his sword still in hand he cut off the right wing and jumped away. The broken fighter went soaring down to the ocean just as Naruto grabbed onto a Hornet. The pilot looked at him with wide eyes behind her helmet shades. She had seen his actions and was slightly impressed.

Naruto tapped on the hatch and motioned for her to take him up. She nodded and quickly began gaining altitude. Before long she was well above the battle to let Naruto do another run on the fighters. As Naruto jumped off she could only shake her heads. _Damn, _Raptor thought, _and I thought Spartans and ODSTs were nuts. _Her alarms began blaring at her. She looked up in time to see a ball of green enemy flying right at her. "Shit!" She cried as she forced the Hornet to bank to the left. The bolt of green energy struck the left wing and destroyed it. Sparks flew up and danced off her body. She gasped in pain as her chest exploded when a shard of hot metal went through her back and out chest.

Naruto looked up as a small piece bounced off his back. His eyes widened at the sight of the falling fireball that was heading towards him. He looked back towards the battle and stabbed his sword into the back of a Banshee as it boosted out of the way. The ball of fire flew past them and smacked into a Banshee that exploded on impact. _"Uzumaki," _Thel shouted. _"Would you please stow your sword away! You almost stabbed me!"_

"Sorry!"

"_Sorry doesn't cut it unless you remove the sword!" _Naruto grumbled a low curse as he pulled it out. _"Thank you, Uzumaki." _

"No problem."

"_They're retreating?!" _Someone shouted.

"_That's right you mothers! Run!" _Johnson shouted over the radios. Naruto sighed as he watched the last of the three Banshees that were trailing behind explode into purple flames. "_ETA damn quick! Standby for pickup." _Johnson told the Chief. Naruto was glanced over to where they were before he looked up at the _Shadow of Intent_. Once inside the Banshee was taken in for repairs while the _Dawn_ and the Pelicans all returned to them. Now they had a battle to prepare for since they knew where Truth was.

25. Chapter 25

Chapter 25

Naruto grimaced as the rookie pilot banked just a tad to the left out fear of hitting one of the Pelicans that he was flying behind and beside. Once the pilot was back on track he quickly set the Phantom into a steady flight just a few feet behind the Pelican it was ordered to follow. Five Pelicans and two Phantoms flew in a tight V formation with the two Phantoms behind the Pelicans. It wasn't because they wanted to. In fact the Phantom pilots had insisted that they be up front. However they couldn't do that right now. They only had a handful of Phantoms left and unlike the Pelicans; they had a longer flight time do to their fuel cells.

Naruto's radio crackled to life. "_We hit these three generators and the barrier will fall?" _Miranda asked Spark.

"_A small section, yes," _Spark replied.

They flew in low, startling a patrolling Unggoy that fell on its butt as they flew over him. The ramp for the first Pelican popped open just as Tobi looked around. John had suggested that he take Sasuke, Konohamaru, Haku, and a few ODSs that had been with Naruto. But even with them John wondered what his chances were right now. They didn't have many people left to fight for them. John knew that the Spartans could handle anything. They could win. But still he did wonder if this would really be the end of it all. As the ramp fully opened John spied the others breaking formation. The other Spartans were in the other Pelicans that would be heading towards the third generator while they hit number one.

"_Good enough," _Miranda spoke up. "_Johnson, drop the Chief off at the first generator, than head towards the third. The Elites will punch right down the middle." _

"_Rodger that!"_

Plasma began flying into the air on all three locations to stop the advancing teams. The radios went fuzzy with the human teams, leaving Naruto and his team in the dark on their statues. Naruto sighed inwardly though. Thel was flying on the other Phantom with Sore, Sire, Fin, Seer, Oto, and Rin. Sore was back, to his old self. No broken legs and his single damaged heart was now, fully healed. Naruto didn't want him to come but Thel informed him that they'd need everyone they could use for this. So it was no surprise when Naruto got stuck with his dad as a squad mate.

The pilot forced the Phantom to make a hard left while dipping down. Konan was thrown to the ground from the force of the turn while the

others all tried to keep from falling. She growled out something that no one caught as she got back up. "What the hell kind of flying is that?!" Rauk yelled in anger. The pilot gave his apologies as the hatches opened up. Naruto had forced them open and ran to the other side of the aft. Konan blinked at his actions. "Just what are you planning?"

"Something stupid," he replied as he ran towards the opened hatch and jumped out.

Yahiko looked out of the opening and gawked at him. _And they think that Hidan was crazy, _he thought.

Naruto blinked as he tried to remember how to work the new attachments to his suit. It remained the same but now had two grappling hooks that could be fired to a length of seventy meters. They were mounted on his forearms. He had gotten some training with them but hadn't quite mastered it. The others all got the same equipment and had learned them quicker than he had. "Old tech" had been the words used to describe them by Haer, but Naruto was finding them rather fun during his training. No now he was regretting not "actually" learning how to work them.

He growled and raised his left arm up to the rock wall. Tightening his hand into a fist smoke appeared and something flew out of the small opening at high speeds. There was a yank and Naruto suddenly found himself swinging towards the rock wall. Not what he had in mind but it was a start. He raised his other arm and fired the other one. It flew over the metal structure that was attached the side of the rock wall over the massive ocean. Naruto could see the hooks spring open as it flew completely over the other side of the side of the structure. It quickly began retracting and he was yanked towards it. Naruto detached the first cable and went swinging towards the structure.

The Jiralhanae up top looked at the cable with wide eyes. A few Kig-Yar were trying to cut it apart with a crystal cutlass that was slowly cutting through it. The cable tightened and a shadow appeared over them. The cable went slack just as a blur landed down between them. In a flash they were on the ground with missing limbs and heads. Naruto grabbed one of the Kig-Yar by the head with his armored tail and snapped his neck as he went running up to the Jiralhanae with fuel rod guns. Their Chieftain turned to face him with a roar as he ordered its pack to fire on him. Naruto jumped over the wall and landed down on a lower level. Jiralhanaes jumped over the edges to follow him down while those with fuel rods continue to fire on the two Phantoms.

Naruto rolled backwards to avoid the swing of a brute shot. He came up kicking one in the bottom of its jaw and landed on its face to send it to the ground where its head was destroyed under Naruto's weight and by the force of his landing. Two rushed him from behind. Naruto did a roundhouse kick to the temple of the one on the left while the other stopped his attack and tackled him to the ground. A bolt of red energy tore its face apart before it could roar at Naruto. The body was thrown back from the force of the bolt and dropped to the ground. Naruto got up and grabbed its friend by the head to drive his energy claws into its throat. He gave it a single twist and removed the head.

A spike grenade landed down in front of him. Naruto grabbed it and threw it up into the face of the Jiralhanae that was looking over the ledge with another. The thing stuck to its face and exploded with a dull thud. A fury of cries sounded from above. Naruto smiled. He had just got them good and mad now. Good. He was mad too.

Unggoy ran at him with plasma pistols and needlers drawn. Naruto smiled at them as his mask opened up. "Do you really want a life without fighting," he asked calmly. They all came to a stop. "I am your lord and I order you to stand down. Do so and I shall protect you from the wrath of the bastard Truth and Jiralhanae scum." The Chieftain roared at them hefted its fuel rod on them. The Unggoy trembled in fear while a few began charging up their plasma pistols. "I offer you asylum and a world where you can breed until you overpopulate your selves."

One of them looked back at the others and then to Naruto. The Chieftain prepared to fire on them when bolts of sizzling red energy clashed with their heads. A Phantom appeared on the wings of the shield generator to release its occupants. Thel was the first to run up to Naruto and the army of Unggoy. "Well done, Uzumaki. Now what shall we do with them?" Naruto motioned for then Unggoy to head to the Phantom that Thel had come from before running up to the door with the others. Thel blinked once as he watched them hobble up to the Phantom's Gravlift before the Phantom parted. Thirty-nine Unggoy would have been dead by their hands had Hinata not asked Naruto to offer asylum to those that were willing to listen.

Thel joined the others at the doors just as the lights went from red to green. The door parted and the teams walked in with their guns up. Naruto took point with Zabuza. The two vanished from sight as they activated their AC units. These had also been given to them as an added measure for their plan. They needed to take the barrier down or everyone would die.

Zabuza came to a sudden halt as he spotted two Lekgolo patrolling up ahead. A red light went over the HUDs of the human team. They motioned for the others to come to a stop as Zabuza told them what he saw. "Lekgolo," Xedrael muttered. He truly had always wondered who would win in a fight between one of them. He wanted to see if he could beat one of them now. He knew Naruto could do it but he still wanted to know if he could do it.

"I'll take them out," Naruto whispered over the radios. The others got into firing positions just in case Naruto failed to knock them down. The young warrior moved like a striking Souna that lived in the oceans of Sanghelios. They were quick and nimble and hard to kill if they grew too big. Naruto ran straight at the first one that was standing straight up, revealing the bare flesh of its armor to them all. Naruto's AC kicked off as he grabbed his energy scythe and cut it in half at the gut of its body. The other one let out a loud grumble of words as it raised its massive cannon. It fired. Naruto jumped away and rolled back up to his feet. The blast stopped and began cooling down. It quickly recharged and prepared to fire. Naruto was already on top of it and stabbing his claws into its throat with low growls sounding with each blow sent. It howled in pain before grabbing him by his tail to throw him away. Naruto slammed into the wall just as it fired at him.

The young warrior rolled out of the way and sprang back up to his

feet to deliver a kick to its chin just as it grabbed him by the ankle and hurled him into the ground. It raised its massive shield as it prepared to smash Naruto with the shield. A blur tackled it into the ground before it could swing its weapon. Zabuza was on top of it with his fist cocked back. The Hunter roared as it reached up for him only to lose its arm from a katana. Zabuza began punching it in the face until it went limp. Naruto looked at the limp body with a frown as Zabuza stabbed his sword into its gut.

"It's dead," Zabuza announced. The Lekgolo reached up to grab him but Zabuza stepped on its hand and cut it off before driving his sword into it again. "Now it's dead!"

Naruto rolled his eyes just as the door at the far end of the room opened up with ten Jiralhanae running out with brute launchers. Tsume ran straight at them with her energy claws out. She tackled the first one to the ground with her claws in its chest. The massive beast grabbed her by her throat to crush it but she tore its arm with her claws before he could do anything. She jumped to stab another one in the face but was kicked away before she could do so. A golden Jiralhanae stepped up to her with its brute launcher pointed at her face. She knocked it away just as Xedrael tackled it to the ground while running it through with his energy sword. Tsume jumped up and jumped onto the back of another Jiralhanae while the others began cutting them down. She grabbed its face and yanked up on it with all her strength and that of the suits' strength to pull its head off with a _pop_.

Thel ran past the dead Jiralhanae with the others slowly following behind him. Nagato brought up the rear beside Konan as she lagged behind a second. He gave her one glance before several spike rounds flew between them. Yahiko and Nagato moved forward with Rauk and Haer. The others grabbed their rifles and returned fire on them. Nagato jumped onto one of the crates and then onto the back of a Jiralhanae as he swung around it. As he did he gripped it by the head and used his weight and motion to drop its head into the ground. Its thick neck broke from the fall. Nagato jumped to his feet as Konan fired over his shoulder. Her round tore the head off of a Jiralhanae that poked its head out from around the corner when it was about to step down on him.

Yahiko dashed underneath one of the Jiralhanae in blue as it swung at him with its fist. Rauk and Haer doubled teamed it with their energy swords without breaking stride. Yahiko jumped over a single Jiralhanae, came to a stop, and drove his twin swords into its lung through the joints of its armor. The Jiralhanae screamed with fury and pain as it whipped around to get away. Yahiko let go of his swords and switched to his wrist blades that unfolded from his forearms. The blade lengthened from one foot to three feet when the ionized gases hissed out of it.

Mikoto flipped the long barrel of her rifle back as Zabuza went charging in. She squeezed off two bolts that tore through the heads of two unprotected Jiralhanae. The team of Jiralhanae was all disposed of before Zabuza could get to them. He gave an angered huff just as the doors were blown apart by two Lekgolo that came storming out of it. Naruto and Thel rushed forward before anyone could move. Naruto dove under the first one while Thel jumped to the side to avoid its sledgehammer like fists. The two jumped towards their backs and stabbed them both once. They howled in pain but spun to knock the

two of them away. Naruto ducked under his blow while the Arbiter grabbed the Lekgolo's weakened arm that had been shot by the others before breaking it off. The Lekgolo Naruto was facing tried to kick him but Naruto grabbed hold of it and dropped an elbow into the back of its knee to send it to the ground. With his sword in hand he stabbed it through the back of its damage armor and pulled the mask covering its face away which pulled most of the colony in that area apart. The colony of worms screamed at him before Naruto cut its arms off and stuck a plasma grenade to its abdomen. Thel kicked his wounded Lekgolo straight into the blast.

Tsume ran straight past them as another pair of Lekgolo appeared in front of her. Tsume raised her claws to fight them but one of them grabbed both of her arms in one hand to throw her into its partner who grabbed her legs. The two gave her body one tug to pull her apart. Tsume was dropped unceremonious to the ground as Zabuza and Xedrael ran forward. Zabuza was swatted away by the massive cannon arm while Xedrael was shoved to the ground. The Lekgolo raised its leg to crush him when Naruto grabbed its leg and broke it off at the knee. The massive creature lost its balance and began to fall backwards when Naruto reached up and tore its shield arm from its body and smacked the other one away.

Spike rounds dug into the walls beside Naruto as he prepared to kill the downed Lekgolo pair. One of the Jiralhanaes began running for some controls. Naruto threw the shield at him while running. It took the heads off of the three Jiralhanae. Naruto ran past their bodies and ran along the wall until he dropped down on the shield and used it like a snowboard down the ramp. The fleeing Jiralhanae turned to see Naruto stick his sword into the ground to pole-vault over him with his rifle out. The young warrior fired two rounds its legs to drop it before tossing his sword into its head. When Naruto dropped down to the ground he grabbed the sword and pulled it back to cut its body in half.

The others raced up to him as Naruto sheathed his katana. Thel ran past Naruto while the others came to a stop beside him. Konan looked at him as soon as she caught up to him and looked back at Tsume. "We'll get her later. Right now we need to get the barrier down. Let's go," he informed them.

(-)

Tobi looked over at his CO while putting his helmet on. Ryan was rather quiet today. No one knew why but they really didn't care at the moment. "So which barrier are we hitting?" Tobi asked.

Deidara closed his eyes tightly with a growl forming deep in his throat. "They aren't numbered you idiot!"

"But why not?"

"Because they just aren't!"

"You want a number," Hidan spoke up with a growl. "We're going after number three!"

"_Sorry to break it to you guys," _the pilot butted in. "_But you guys are going after number one with the Master Chief."_

"How many barriers are there?" Tobi asked.

"Three barriers," Ryan spoke up.

"So we're going after the first. Kyuubi's team is going after number two. And the other guy is going after number three." Kimimaro told them. Kimimaro looked over at Tobi as he counted his own fingers. "What are you doing?"

"First barrier, second barrier! I am Tobi!" He exclaimed. "Tobi is the best!"

Everyone stared at him as the Pelican opened its ramp for them to get off. As they jumped out Kimimaro shook his head. _I'm not riding with him. _Kimimaro jumped out and took the gunner seat on the Warthog before he was forced to get back in the Pelican with Tayuya and Hidan so the Spartans could take the Warthog. The others would take the next Warthog that was to be lowered while Ryan and Gus took the Mongoose. Gus was holding a SPKNr Launcher.

(-)

Rehka collapsed to a knee before Naruto smashed it like a watermelon with a knee kick to the side of his face. The Jiralhanae dropped to the ground with a _thud_ as the others walked in behind Thel. Thel lost all of his teammates to a surprise attack when they got up to the second level of the complex. Now Thel was more than ready to deal with the threat possible watching the tower controls. Naruto motioned for his team to remain here while he and Thel went up top. Nagato and Yahiko nodded while the others ran to the door to guard it. There was no doubt in their minds that the other rooms they had passed by held sleeping or eating Jiralhanae.

Thel walked up to the controls and scanned them over just as Naruto got on the lift. Once he was on Thel hit the switch that would take them up. "Are sure we don't need them?" Thel asked. He knew how strong the Jiralhanae were, as did Naruto.

"Yes. I'm sure we don't need them. I will kill all of them even without my holy powers," he explained. Thel nodded as the lift came to a halt before a large window that blocked all the shots fired by overeager Jiralhanae. Behind the army stood the leader, Rif. Naruto smiled as he jumped down and charged through the army of Jiralhanae that got in his way.

(-)

The first sign of trouble for them was the sound of massive feet pounding on the ground. The next sign was when the ancient metal doors were suddenly blown apart. Smoke billowed from the blown up door while hot metal sputtered against their armor and shields. Two parts of the cloud of a smoke parted at fuel rod cannons were fired at them. Konan jumped away with the others while the Sangheili rolled away to the other side. The smoke parted and a pair of Lekgolo led the charge for six Jiralhanae that were hefting brute launchers.

The Lekgolo raced towards the downed human team while the Jiralhanae ran towards the Sangheili. Konan gripped her rifle as it broke down to its auto rifle mode. She didn't bother sighting on the Jiralhanae that paid her no mind. She just opened up on them. Hot red blobs of

plasma cut through their shields and armor, giving them a good distraction for the Sangheili to get ready for them.

A shadow appeared over her. She looked up in time to see the massive hand of a Lekgolo grabbing her helmet. It began to swing her around with the intentions of plucking her head from her neck before her suit broke the seals on the helmet and let her fall out of it. She rolled away and straight into the large leg of the other Lekgolo. It kicked her hard in the gut and sent her skipping along the ground into the wall next to a still dazed Mikoto. Zabuza was already on his feet and by her side. The Lekgolo pair raised their cannons, charged, and fired on them. The team split up just as the two tear drops exploded on the ground where they had been. Konan was the only one to real feel the shock of the blast and was thrown straight into the wall next to Xedrael. Without a helmet her head banged up against the metal wall, rendering her unconscious.

"Konan," Yahiko cried as he was backhanded, kicked, and then shot in the chest by a Jiralhanae. He flew through the air and straight back behind the ground while Nagato was hurled into the wall on the other corner of the room. Mikoto was on the lower level not moving while Zabuza was trying to get back up to his feet to kill the Jiralhanae that had its foot on his back.

Konan quickly came too as Sire was shot in the face by a Jiralhanae. She jumped up to her feet as the same Jiralhanae lowered its gun to her face. A katana appeared through its chest before it could fire and Nagato appeared on its back with his other wrist blade activated. In one motion he cut its left arm off and tore the other wrist blade from its chest. It collapsed over dead with the katana still in its back. Yahiko got up a moment later with both of his wrist blades active as well. Haer and Rauk shook their heads to clear their grogginess as they gripped their energy swords tightly.

The two Lekgolo roared with rage as the two humans ran at them with the two Sangheili following them closely in step. Sore and Oto pulled out their plasma rifles and began returning fire on the Jiralhanae to keep them pinned down. Yahiko slid under the two Jiralhanae that were staying out of cover because of they were raging and began slicing into their bodies with both weapons. One in the back ran up at him just as Nagato jumped on its back after cutting its arm off. With both hands he gripped its face and began yanking on it with his energy claws. The Jiralhanae screamed in pain before its face was torn off of it body. With one final push Nagato drove his hand through its chest with the help of the energy blades and claws and showed him its heart.

Rauk and Haer doubled one of the Lekgolo while Nagato and Yahiko finished off the last of the Jiralhanae. Rauk jumped onto the back of the Lekgolo while Haer kept its hand occupied which wasn't working very well at the moment. As the Lekgolo raised both arms to try and grab Rauk, Haer drove his energy sword straight into unprotected abdomen forcing it to reach down in an attempt to cover the wound. As it did this Rauk stabbed it in the back of its neck and cut the head off. The creature howled in agony as the colony shriveled up from the intense heat of the blades. When the colony was turned into nothing but a mass of dried flesh it toppled over and Rauk got off it while gripping its chest plate to slam it into the ground.

The two looked over to see Nagato with both blades sticking out of

the front of the Lekgolo's abdomen while Yahiko had his sticking out its back. Both had stabbed it at the same time and dodged the others' blades. The Lekgolo tried to move but the twin katanas in its feet prevented it from taking a single step. The two moved as one and cut the creature in half just as the lift came down. Once the Lekgolo toppled over in two pieces everyone breathed sigh of relief as Naruto and Thel walked off the lift. Naruto was holding a hammer on his shoulder with his head cocked to the side a bit.

"Have fun," he asked while breaking the hammer in half. Thel looked between the team, taking note of the dead Sangheili. Sire, Oto, Rin, and Seer were dead. Fin was wounded, Yahiko was winded, had damaged armor, and Nagato's helmet was half destroyed. The only odd thing now was that his visible eye had changed to a pale white with six rings inside it. Thel thought nothing of it as their radios crackled to life.

"_Thel, Uzumaki, the human that went to the third tower needs help," _Rtas informed them. _"I have a team of Phantoms on route to your tower to pick you up._"

"Understood," Thel replied. He looked to his fallen comrades with sad eyes. "We must move the dead outside for the Phantoms to pick up. We shall not leave them behind." Naruto nodded and picked up two of them while the others grabbed the others. Xedrael helped Fin moved towards the doors. Zabuza was the one to grab Tsume as they moved towards the doors on the lower level. Along the way they found Mikoto without her helmet and blood trickling down her face from the fall. Once they were outside the two Phantoms appeared as Banshees began fighting with the Hornets of the UNSC.

One of the Banshees turned towards them as the dead and wounded were transported up into the aft of the drop ship. _Shit, _Naruto thought as he jumped from the top section where he had been lookout, landed on the top of the Phantom and ran at the approaching Banshee before jumping at the last second. The pilot saw him and rose its nose up to avoid him. It was too late. Naruto grabbed hold of the wing and climbed up next to the cockpit. With a quick yank he tore it open before he began giving the pilot a beating. Naruto grabbed his head and continually slammed his head into the controls of the fighter before the pilot forced it into a hard left turn. The young warrior lost his grip on the pilot and slip towards the anti-gravity pod on the wing.

"_Are you trying to get yourself killed, Foxman!" _Ryan shouted over the radio.

Naruto looked down to see a Hornet tailing them. Ryan was riding shotgun at the moment. "No. I'm trying to find a new way to kill you!" Ryan began laughing over the radio before he gave him the finger. Naruto shook his head as he took his katana out and cut the wing off just as the Banshee began to roll. Gravity took over and Naruto fell down onto the Hornet. He bounced off the top of the Hornet and rolled off the edge. Ryan grabbed him at the last second to keep him from falling into the ocean. Ryan pulled Naruto up next to him as the two Phantoms began to leave. The Banshee fell into the ocean. "Thank you, pilot!"

"_No problem. And my name is Shirley," _she informed him.

Ryan looked back at the cockpit and then to Naruto before saying, "Oh you thank her but not me? You're a dickâ€¦ unless I get a reward after this."

"You get to live. That's your reward."

"That's not a reward for me. That's a reward for all the fine young fortunate ladies back on Earth."

"_I'm a lady. And I don't feel very fortunate."_

"I said 'Fine ladies', Shirley," Ryan grumbled. Naruto shook his head as he listened to Shirley rant about incompetent men and why she would never date another Marine again. Naruto shook his head as the Jiralhanae Phantom exploded into chunks of metal that fell into the ocean. As the Hornet roared over the cliff Naruto jumped off. Ryan blinked as he watched Naruto land down on the cliff. _He's an idiot. And if he gets himself killed that just means I get Hinata back. _Ryan's eyes glazed over as he remembered Naruto's words to him as they had made their way to the towers.

Naruto landed down on the rock wall and down it before getting his footing. As he got his footing plasma shots zipped over his armor, cracking and burning it as he made his way around the rock while avoiding the barrage of plasma fire until he was forced to jump down on the AA Wraith Tank. Naruto slammed down on the hatch with a _thud_. The Jiralhanae in the turret turned to face Naruto just as Naruto stabbed him in the throat. The hot blade evaporated most of his blood in his throat and collapsed his lungs. The pilot kept firing into the sky as Naruto stabbed his katana into the hatch. He knew he killed the pilot when he heard the screams of pain became silenced but the thing kept firing on the approaching Hornets.

A single Hornet that was moving slowly was struck in the side, taking off its wingman and left wing. The burning Hornet spun as it fell to earth. Naruto cursed as he watched it come barreling towards him. He jumped away at the last second to avoid the massive machine of burning metal as it slammed into the Wraith. Naruto put his back against the structures' wall near the ramp as spike rounds chipped and bounced off the walls in an attempt to keep him pinned down.

A battle rifle sounded against the sound of the roaring flames. Naruto looked up to see Ryan with his battle rifle up and knocking holes in the heads of Unggoy and Kig-Yar. When the Jiralhanae that had been taking cover came out he ran towards the other side of the ramp and took cover. Naruto shook his head at him as he reloaded his weapon. Once Ryan had a fresh magazine in he turned around and fired into the faces of two Jiralhanae that stood tall and took the rounds before their shields gave out and their heads took it.

"You're insane, you know that?" Naruto pulled out his rifle and fired two red bolts of plasma into the face of a single Jiralhanae that was running down the ramp. Ryan ignored him as he kept firing on them. More Jiralhanae and Kig-Yar appeared, keeping the two pinned down. As the firing increased, Naruto began realizing that they were probably about to just overrun them with sheer numbers. "Can you guys land over here and drop off some warriors," he asked Thel over his signal unit.

"_We are on our way," _Thel replied. Naruto breathed a sigh of relief

when he saw the Phantom appear. More Jiralhanae turned to the larger threat as its turrets began to fire down on them. The hatches opened just as the Jiralhanae with fuel rods turned to fire on them. Red lines of plasma tore through their faces from Konan as Naruto's team descended down the Gravlift with ODSs being dropped off by a Pelican that squeezed in with them. "I shall be on the next Phantom, Uzumaki." _

"Don't worry, we can deal with them." Naruto's team moved up beside him while the ODSs moved beside their commanding officer. The ODSs reloaded their weapons just as a Jiralhanae jumped over the ledge and landed down in front of Naruto. It raised its spike rifle to Naruto's face. Naruto knocked it away from his head as it began to fire and stabbed him in the gut. The Jiralhanae roared in pain as Naruto pulled it up until he cut him in half. The body fell backwards while shook his head, catching only the faintest of glimpses at a fully shot ODS.

"Holy shit," Naruto looked over as Ryan screamed that. The ODS that had been shot was still standing with the spike rounds in his chest and side. Naruto himself blinked twice at the sight. "Holyman, are you alright?"

"What?" Hidan asked clearly unaware or uncaring of the five rounds in his side.

"You got shot and you're still standing." Zack informed him without so much as an indication that he was shocked by this.

"And," Hidan asked without care.

"Fuck it!" Ryan shouted as he began firing on the Jiralhanae that were trying to charge them. Naruto shook his head as he took a few steps back while sizing the wall up. Ryan tossed a grenade at the approaching Unggoy just as Naruto ran up the wall and jumped it. Unggoy went flying from the explosive allowing Naruto the chance to sneak up and kill the captain leading the Unggoy into battle. "Let's move up!"

"Konan, stay back and shoot them from a distance!" Rauk ordered. When he turned to make sure she understood his orders he found her behind the burning Wraith with Zack. The two were taking out the Jiralhanae with fuel rods at the moment. Rauk looked over at Haer who was about to jump up like Naruto had. Haer ran at the wall and jumped it, leaving Rauk and Ahriel behind. Ahriel did it next and succeeded. "Right," Rauk said out loud. He jumped the wall and landed behind Ahriel who nearly bumped him over the edge by accident.

The ODSs moved up the ramp while firing on the approaching Jiralhanae and Kig-Yar. Naruto ran across the structure towards the other AA Wraith with both katanas out. A single Jiralhanae with a fuel rod turned towards him as a red beam of energy took off most of its right side. It fired its weapon once. The round was wild and missed Naruto but it slammed into several fusion crates that exploded just a second later. The flying shrapnel tore through two more Jiralhanae carrying fuel rods while wounding others. Naruto finished the Jiralhanae off as a Hornet began firing on the Wraith. Naruto came to a stop just at the ramp as it exploded into fiery bits. The Hornet moved in and exploded as four green blurs jumped out of it. They rolled when they landed and brought their weapons up.

It was the Spartans.

Naruto was brought back from his confused state as the Jiralhanae began to flee when more Sangheili began to appear. Naruto joined the Arbiter and Spartans as they made their way to the back part of the structure where a single door was. The bodies of fallen Marines littered the ground near the door. Thel waited for the others to move in before they would take the door. Before they could do so the door opened up with five Jiralhanae coming out to greet them. A barrage of plasma and tracer rounds tore them apart before they could blink. The door closed as the last one died.

"Move up." John ordered as the Spartans pushed forward. The ODSTs remained behind while the Sangheili went in behind Thel and Naruto. John got close enough to the door for it to open up by his presence and quickly looked for a target. He found three charred suits of Mark six MJOLNIR armor lying on the ground. He checked his TEAM BIOS to find that it was Neji, Tenten, and Hanabi. Neji and Tenten were dead while Hanabi had a very weak pulse. "Get them back to the ship," he ordered to his team. Konohamaru and Haku took them away while Sasuke remained with the Master Chief. John could morn over their deaths later. Right now he could get revenge.

Naruto ran past him with both katanas out just two Lekgolo walked out from their hiding spots. The sound of flapping wings got his attention just as he was about to charge down the first Lekgolo.

"Worthless parasites," Thel shouted as he fired on the flying bugs. They were focused on Naruto though. Naruto ran straight through their fire and towards the first Lekgolo. He could take it this time. Zabuza was already about to tackle the other one when three plasma grenades flew over his shoulder and stuck to their face. The detonation destroyed most of the body but it would be dead either way. The heat alone had shriveled up most of them worms inside the suit of armor. Zabuza looked over to the other one as the last of flying bugs fell down around him. Naruto was riding on the back of Lekgolo stabbing it in the back after he destroyed the back section of the armor. The Lekgolo reached up to grab him but Naruto cut the limb off at the shoulder through its cracked armor. It reached up with the other hand and grabbed him by the ankle. Before it could anything Thel ran up and cut its head off. The creature fell backwards dead while Naruto jumped back to his feet after being thrown into the ground.

"I could have dealt with it," he muttered. Thel shook his head as they moved towards the next set of doors. Once the team was back together they ran through the doors and up the ramp Jiralhanae moved out of their hiding spots at a bad time and were cut down by Naruto's team. Sasuke ran to the left up a small ramp and jumped up behind them with his shotgun. He shot each Brute once in the back and again in the back of the head as Naruto's team was pinned down by their combined fire. He took out two of them before they noticed. When they turned to face him Naruto and Yahiko both ran up and cut them down.

As the last of the Jiralhanae fell more of the flying bugs appeared but the Sangheili were quick to shoot them down. John and Sasuke ran up to the lift while the others remained behind. "Darken this tower

and the barrier shall fall. Go Spartans! We have no time to waste." Thel informed them. As the lift began to raise the others made their way back to the lower level and up front where the only way in was. Naruto took up the left side next to the large glass wall with his shinobi warriors while Thel took up the other side with the Sangheili warriors.

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Hinata felt a wave of guilt as she got the news about Tsume. If she had had more time she might have been able to equip them with shield generators. But she knew it wasn't her fault. Tsume, since she had known her, had been somewhat abrasive and quick to move without thinking. She knew it wasn't her fault but she still felt like it was her fault.

Yugito snapped her fingers in front of her face to break her of her sulking. "It shall be okay. But we have more wounded to deal with now," she informed her. Hinata jumped back to her feet and ran towards the hanger. But as soon as she got there her eyes widened in horror at the sight of the three blackened Spartan armors that were being carried by Haku, Konohamaru, and a few Sangheili warriors. Her mind went blank as the only surviving one was brought before them. "What happened to them?" Yugito pulled the helmet off slowly. Hanabi's once childish face was covered with burn marks and blisters'. Her face had swollen from the heat and beating she must have taken. Blood leaked through the cracks in her armor.

"I do not know." '

Hinata pulled the stretcher out that one of the Unggoy brought her and they placed Hanabi in it. The gravity field kept her stable and wouldn't allow her to move as they rushed her to the infirmary on the ship. The others were brought to the infirmary as well and would be put in stasis fields to preserve their bodies until they were finished with the battle. After the battle they could be buried on their home world without any sign of aging or damage.

Sangheili doctors helped pull the armor off while Huragoks began mending her burned and torn flesh as quickly as they could. Hinata had stopped helping after the chest plate was removed. Yugito couldn't blame her for it. Working on a total stranger was different from working on a family member. She would be careless and believe each action a mistake. But there other reason was that her chest was burned so badly that parts of her ribs could be seen. Her armor had failed around her chest, leading to easy burns that might have killed her had she not been enhanced by Ambrose's method. His actions in their enhancements had saved Hanabi's life, something that he was happy for even now after his death.

Alarms began screaming in the infirmary. Hinata paled at the memory of them. Just seconds later something struck the ship that sent her to the ground. The Spartans didn't move as the ship's rear dipped down. Everyone was thrown to the back of the infirmary as the ship sought to correct its self and find a stable flight path. As the alarms stopped screams the monitors that were connected to Hanabi began to scream. Before long they stopped screaming and showed no pulse or heartbeat. The floating Huragok were quick to get back to work while Yugito was forced to tend with the crying Hyuuga.

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Rtas began to move the ship through the downed barrier with a smile. At long last the war would be over. The Prophet of Truth would know die for a war that he started out of fear. Sure their Covenant might have been broken but not forever. The Humans were the children of the Forerunners, their gods. For all the sins that they had committed during the war, Rtas was happy to know that he would now be committing the greatest of sins for the sake of his people. He would have the honor of blasting the temple that held the Prophet.

"Now, Prophet, your end has come." He whispered.

Alarms began blaring. The crew began looking at the sensors trying to figure out what it was until Chichi whispered it. "High Charity," he gasped. He checked his sensors again as proximity warnings began to blare. "By the Gods! Brace for impact!" Alarms stopped as a piece of High Charity punched straight through the ship. Sparks zipped from wall to wall and from control panel to control panel. Sangheili warriors that were standing were thrown to the ground while that had been sitting were thrown tossed into the panels they sat in front of. Rtas was thrown straight to holotank that had once shown the temple they were targeting.

"Is everyone alright?" Rtas asked groggily. He was quick to stand up. He could feel that his left leg was broken but he ignored the pain. Loud growls sounded from his crew, a sign that they were alright. He was thankful for that much. "Give me a status on the ship. Can it still fight?" He needed weapons right now. He didn't life support, gravity, or anything else. He just needed weapons.

"Life Support is still functioning. Weapons are disabled for the time being! Huragok are moving to repair them now. The Unggoy in the area that can translate for us are saying that it will be some time before they are fully repaired." Chichi announced grimly. Rtas swung a fist into his chair as he got back in it. This was bad.

"_Shipmaster, what's your status?!" _Miranda screamed over the radios. Rtas sighed as he realized he couldn't vaporize the temple now.

"Significant damage," he reported. "Weapon systems are disabled."

"_Move to a safe distance! Stay away from the Flood!_"

"Why would the parasite come here," he asked the Oracle.

Spark floated beside him with his lens blinking rapidly as he tried to begin connecting himself to the Ark's core for information again. "The Ark is out of range of all the active instillations. Priority: We must contain this outbreak beforeâ€¦!"

"_No! First we stop Truth. Then we'll deal with the Flood."_

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Naruto and CO ran out of the structure with the Spartans as more and

more Flood infected humans, Jiralhanae, and Sangheili, came racing at them from down the lift and from the next level. As the door opened several infected Jiralhanae turned to greet them with brute shots. Naruto ran right through them while killing a few with his energy scythe. The ODSs that had been left behind were on the top of the structure trying to stay away from the infection. Once they saw Naruto and the others they all jumped down and began running towards the Phantom that was waiting at the end of the structure.

The hatches opened up on the side of the Phantom as Naruto's team ran up to it. Thel was busy talking with Spark about something as Naruto told them, "get inside and get to safety. You have very little experience fighting the parasite. I shall go ahead." Konan was the one to shake her head which made Naruto growl inwardly. "Listen to me, as your commanding officer, I order you to get on the Phantom and to safety. I shall not lose another friend or teammate to this war."

Yahiko stepped forward with his damaged armor and shook his head, "I'm sorry but we're staying with you. You got us this far and we shall see it through to the end."

Nagato nodded while saying, "We have endured the suffering of our people because of this man's actions. I shall see it through to the end as well. Damaged armor or not I shall not turn away when I can save more lives with our strengths."

Naruto sighed. He should have known that they would be stubborn. Rauk, Haer, and Ahriel all understood his reasons and were quick to board. Looking back at the humans that were a part of their team, they wondered if this would make them appear weak. Naruto took a calming breath before decking Konan, Yahiko, and Nagato straight in to the ground. "You swore an oath to follow my orders regardless of any situation. You even told me that you would come home with me to Sanghelios and see me as Kaidon. So now, acting as your Kaidon, I command you to get on the Phantom. Or would you like to die for failing to uphold your words?" The three Sangheili that were a part of his team all knew that Naruto was serious now. But the others, even though they had seen and heard about what Naruto would do to those that wouldn't listen, remained put until he grabbed them and threw them in just as Thel jumped up with the Oracle. "I'm breaking all of your legs when I get back," he told them as he walked towards the passenger side of a Gauss Warthog.

"Who the hell said you could ride shotgun?" Naruto looked over to see Ryan sitting in the driver seat with Zack in the back. "Get your one-tailed ass out of my hog."

"Make me," he hissed. Zack looked down at the two with disgust.

"I sure as hell will if you don't!"

"Let's get moving people!" Reynolds yelled, cutting Ryan off. Ryan took one last look at the warrior sitting next to him before he followed the tank that was being driven by John while the turret was manned by Sasuke.

"We'll finish this later," Ryan promised. Naruto dismissed him with a shake of his head as he placed his feet up on the dashboard while bringing his rifle out. Zack shook his head at the two as they drove

past the Master Chief and his tank.

Snow was the first thing they saw as they crossed the into the inner section of the Ark. Zack blinked some of the bright light away when his faceplate hadn't polarized fast enough to block it all and sighted through the HUD of his helmet after it wirelessly linked to the weapons' computer system. John's tank came rolling in behind at a slower pace with the Mongoose racing to catch up with them. The all traction tires spun when they hit a soft patch of soil that kicked up mud as they bounced out and over smaller rocks. Ryan forced the thing into a hard right turn that put them right in the line of fire for the Jiralhanae with fuel rods and brute launchers. Naruto and Zack opened fire on them as they began firing on them. Ryan floored it around the rounds of plasma and auto grenades as the Spartan controlled tank came up behind them.

John locked onto the largest cluster of them and fired one massive slug at them. The round tore two of them in half while continuing through without incident and exploded against the fusion barrels that were stored up near a Gravlift to keep a sniper tower up. The tower wobbled as the shockwave and shrapnel hit it. Its occupants fell to the ground or jumped off only to be gunned down by the happy Mongoose driver and rider that zoomed by. Zack fired three shots at the Chieftain that was trying to get them in order. The first one nicked its shoulder and spun it around while the second was a clean miss and the third tore it clean in half.

"Hot damn," Ryan shouted.

"Shut up and drive, sir!" Zack shouted back.

"What did you say, Snipes?!" Naruto punched Ryan in the shoulder for mouthing off which earned him a quick tap of the breaks to send him face first into the dashboard. "Don't ever fuck with a man behind the steering wheel, got it?!" Naruto punched him one last time as Ryan drove through a dark cave that exited to a cliff and hundreds of Banshee fliers with Wraith tanks firing on the cave exit. A Shad Turret turned and fired on them as Zack returned fire to take it out.

"Go left!" Zack shouted.

"No to the right!" Naruto ordered.

"Let me drive!" Ryan shouted as he drove straight up the middle the tank destroyed the approaching Ghost. Zack took out three fleeing Brutes while Naruto killed a sniper on the far tower in the distance that had started taking shots at them. Ryan turned the corner with the Mongoose now a head of them and stared down the Wraith that had been firing at them. Gus, who was riding on the back of the Mongoose, took aim at the Wraith tank while Zack and Naruto began firing on it. Naruto took out the turret use while the two brothers took out the front of it. The driver remained stubborn and continued to fire hot white plasma down on them. "Can't you hit that son of a bitch?" Ryan asked over the roar of gunfire.

"You think you can do a better job?" Zack snapped back.

Naruto looked back as a Ghost appeared behind them. He dropped a plasma grenade that exploded beneath the driver and sent the vehicle

flipping. When Zack turned to see it he could only shake his head while muttering his thanks. The Wraith tank turned to them as the Warthog passed them was struck in the side by the Scorpion tank that rolled on by without stopping. With the Wraith tank now destroyed Naruto was able to breathe a little better until they saw another ball of plasma heading towards them. Ryan hit the E-break, spun the tires, and hit the gas just as it came down beside Naruto. Plasma splashed up onto the side of his helmet, melting through the armor it had. Naruto tore it off with a scream of pain and watched it slowly continue to melt on the ground as Ryan pushed the vehicle forward.

"You fucking bastard," Naruto swore as he punched him in the head. Ryan forced the Warthog to go through a small dark cave underneath a tower and dodge the shad turrets. "You did that on purpose so it could kill me!" He punched him again, this time cracking his faceplate a bit.

Ryan snorted at him. "Yeah, I asked that fucking ape in the Wraith tank to fire at you and burn your, pretty little face." He mocked. Naruto punched him again while Zack fired at a stray Ghost. "You little fucker," Ryan shouted as he parked the Warthog in the darkness of the cave so he could punch Naruto in the side of the head. Naruto reeled back and punched him in the center of his faceplate. It cracked open and sent glass onto his face. Ryan tore it off and tackled Naruto out of the Warthog as he began to beat him up.

Zack jumped off of the turret and pulled Ryan back. "Hey," he punched Ryan in the face to knock him out of it. "We don't have time for your bullshit. We've almost won. Once this is over you two can fucking kill each other all you want. Now let's complete this fucking mission so we can stop Truth from activating the Rings." Ryan took one look at Zack before looking down at Naruto. "Not let's go." Zack jumped back on the turret while Ryan took up the wheel again. Naruto took up the passenger side.

"_Hornets inbound," _Reynolds shouted over the radios. The ground shook as the Warthog came out of the darkness of the cave. Two clouds of snow were covering two objects that were quickly identified by Reynolds. "_I count two Scarabs. Repeat: Two Scarabs." _

"Head for the edge," Naruto ordered as he jumped up and crawled out onto the hood of the Warthog. Ryan blinked as he watched this. Was he really that insane? "Hit that patch of the ground that looks like a ramp and I'll take out one of them. Don't worry about me. I can do this."

Ryan shook his head as the irony of what he was about to do sunk in. "No. We'll hit it together." _Besides, I lost Hinata to you. I acknowledge that for now. But I will take her back one day. _

"How about you guys just drive the mother fucker up on the god damn Scarab instead of pulling some insane stunt that will get us all killed?" Zack suggested. Naruto remained on the hood as they came up the ramp. The Scarab close to it began to stretch as it stood back up. If they were going to do it now, now was the time while it was close and not moving away from them. Ryan sighed inwardly as he mashed on the gas. The Warthog sped up as they got closer to the ramp. Naruto fired rounds straight at the Jiralhanae onboard. The Scarab turned to face them and began moving towards them. "I think it

sees us!"

"I think they don't like me." Ryan muttered.

"They don't like me." Naruto corrected as they hit the ramp. The Warthog flew through the air and came down on a large group of Grunts that began running around in terror. The dismounted a bit before the vehicle hit the ground and began running towards the reactor. Naruto turned run backwards as he began firing on the pursuing Kig-Yar and Jiralhanaes, "Come on," he shouted as he drew his energy swords. They all charged him while Ryan began setting up the charges. Zack took the other side and began firing on the approaching Jiralhanae with his sniper rifle.

Ryan quickly placed the satchel on the shield generator around the core and began dialing the code in for a remote detonation. Zack screamed and he paused to look over his shoulder. Zack was pinned to a wall with five rounds in his chest. A Jiralhanae came in and fired at him. Ryan ducked and rolled while returning fire. Naruto tossed an energy sword into its face as he ran into the room. Ryan got up as he came in and helped him to his feet, "its set," he explained as he turned to face it. A single spike round was inside the antenna that would pick up the signal from his remote. The timer was also shot to hell because of the spike round. "Oh no."

"What?" More Jiralhanae appeared but were shot off by red beams of energy. In the distance he could see a green Phantom with the hatch open. Konan was sniping out what she could with the help of Ahriel. "We don't have time. We need to go."

"The timer and remote won't work. We'll have to do it manual from right here." He explained. More and more Jiralhanae began to appear. Naruto noticed this only because the red lines of plasma were getting higher in numbers around them. "One of us will have to stay here and blow it up manually." He told him grimly. Naruto looked him over for a moment before walking towards the bomb. Ryan stopped him as he turned to the bomb. Two spike rounds were lodged in his back. He was lucky to be standing at the moment. "I won't be much good on the ground and I can't survive a fall at this height in my condition. So I'll do it. You just keep Hinata safe. Make her happy for me. I know I couldn't do it." He turned back to see Naruto already walking away. "Hey," Naruto stopped and turned his head slightly so he could see him. "I always hated you. Not just because you took Hinata away from me, but because I hate foxes. They are mean little bastards."

"I know," Naruto tossed a grenade at Ryan as he jumped down. The grenade stuck to the center of his back at he turned around without seeing the grenade. As soon as he hit the detonation button the grenade went off. The Scarab toppled to the ground as its reactor was destroyed in an instant from the combined heat of the plasma grenade and the satchel charge. Sections of the Scarab explode outwardly and it collapsed to the ground leaking white flames onto the ground. As the first one was destroyed the second one fell. Naruto landed on the ground and looked over at the burning remains of the Scarab. _That's for trying to kill me you bastard. _

Naruto ran up to the ramp as Thel appeared with the Oracle. The Master Chief and Sasuke appeared a second or two later after jumping out of a burning Hornet. Thel glanced once at Naruto before looking up at Spark. "Activate this bridge, Oracle. The Flood scales the

citadels far walls," he commanded. Spark went to working on the light bridge as Thel turned to the others. "The Prophet will die by my hands. Not theirs." John just nodded as the bridge activated.

"Calamity," Spark cried. "If only we had more time."

The two races began running down the light bridge towards the large door as the Hornets began mopping up the rest of the fighters. As they ran inside the doors closed and John could taste blood and iron in his mouth again. He felt woozy as something spoke to him. _"I askedâ€¦ and I answered. For a moment of safety, I loosed damnation upon the stars," _the voice whispered.

"_My faithfulâ€¦ stand firm," _Truth began his long speech to those still alive and able to hear him. His face was all over the walls as he spoke. _"Though are enemies crowd us, we tread the blessed path. In a moment I shall light the rings. And all who believeâ€¦ shall be saved." _He made a fist with both hands as he moved the chair out of the way. Johnson was being held up by a Brute that just stood there and took his punches.

"_Chief," _Miranda's voice broke over the radios. _"How close are you?" _

The four looked up the long lift with a sigh. "Not close enough."

(-)

Johnson was thrown to the ground as the Chieftain knocked his former holder away. It was trying to kill him. Johnson shook his head a bit, his swollen eye blocking some of the things around him. "Is that the best you got?" He mocked. The Chieftain gave out a small gruff as he picked him up with one hand. Johnson struggled in as he spoke. "Come onâ€¦ impress me." He demanded.

The Chieftain raised its massive hand to crush his tiny head as Truth spoke to them. "Stop you imbecile! He wants you to kill him." He turned his chair around while motioning for the Jiralhanae to bring him over to him. "I'd prefer that you did not." Johnson's head was slammed into the controls of the panel. He was forced to stare at the Prophet who looked very pleased at the moment. The Ape general grabbed him by the head and picked him up so he could speak.

"What's the matterâ€¦ big shot? Can't start your own party?" He asked happily.

The Prophet glared at him as he leaned over to face him. "I'll admitâ€¦ I need your help. But that secret dies with all the rest." He told him happily.

The roar of a Pelican sounded behind them as the glass broke. Jiralhanaes were quick to pull out their weapons as it ran over two of them while blocking the Prophet from Johnson. Smoke covered the area as everyone tried to get back on their feet. Johnson held his side where a spike round had hit him earlier as a shotgun sounded in the smoke. "Johnson! Sound off!" It was Miranda Keys.

"G-get out of here!" He ordered through his coughing.

"Not without you!" She shot another Brute but only damaged its armor.

"You delay the inevitable," Truth hissed. "One of you will light the rings! You cannot hope to kill them all," he informed her as she pulled her pistol out and held the shotgun in the chest of a Brute. She took a few steps away from it as she looked at the pistol. She knew that was true. She wasn't trained for combat like this. She had some training, but she was Navy, not Marines.

"You're right," she whispered darkly.

Truth blinked as he looked down towards the fallen Brute and picked its spike rifle up. He couldn't let her kill them both. He was slow to move as Johnson began talking to her, telling her to shoot. She was hesitant. Truth grabbed the weapon, took aim, and fired a few rounds into her back. Johnson ran forward to catch her as Truth walked up behind her with his weapon grasped between two of his curved fingers as if it was a disease. "Your forefathers wisely set aside their compassion. Steeled themselves for what needed to be done." Truth came to a stop at the controls while the Sergeant Major was shoved up to it. "I see nowâ€¦ why the left you behind. You were weakâ€¦ and Godsâ€¦ must be strong." Johnson's struggle to fight them came to an end. He wasn't even paying attention when Truth forced his hand into hitting the buttons to make it work.

The rings began lighting up. The signal was being sent and Johnson knew he did it. He doomed the entire universe because he was weak.

(-)

John knew it had happened long before he even got to the top. He and Sasuke both jumped the four foot gap to the top and slowly began walking towards the large set of rings while Naruto and Thel waited for the lift to come to a stop. The two held their weapons at the ready as they followed the two Spartans. Two green blurs landed down in front of them. It was the two massive Flood bodies that Naruto had come to call "Tank Flood" because of how strong they were.

"Do not shoot," they spoke in harmony. "But listen." The four lowered the weapons just enough that they were still pointed at them in case it was a trick. "Let me lead you safelyâ€¦ to our foe. Only you can halt what he has set in motion." They spoke. The four began walking again as tiny Flood Spores began running towards the army of Jackals, Brutes, and Grunts. Naruto looked over at Thel in confusion.

They were confused. To be working with the Flood after all their battles was just strange to them.

(-)

Hidan slumped down against the side of a Phantom as he and the others got the news. Zack, Gus, Isaac, and now Ryan were dead. For once in his life he cursed his immortality. What good would it do him if he was all that would remain when the end came for the world? All his time he spent worrying about his own death now seemed to want to come back to him. How had he let it not plague him until now? Everything he lived for was because of his own fear of dying.

I must be a hypocrite then, he thought. He had killed so many people to further his own life. He slipped his hand into his back pocket to pull out a photo of a young woman standing beside him. Long black hair, ruby red eyes, and a smile that had made him adore her was his reason for living back then. _You said we'd be together forever, Hikari. You lied to me. You left me alone and with the fear of dying. But look at me now. All I do is torture myself for a god that won't bring you back to me. _He crumpled the photo but unfolded it and put it back in his pocket. _Why must I live? Is this torture now? _

(-)

Tobi remained in the Phantom as he looked over a photo of a young man standing beside Madara and a young woman. He had the memories of Madara. These two were his family. One was taken by his own hands and the other by the Brutes. His wife, a woman he had left in Konoha to await his return, had died at the hands of the Brutes on that day. His dream had been shattered and Tobi had been brought in to fill the void.

Tobi was the name of his son. Madara had had a son with his wife that was named Tobi. When he learned of the attack on Konoha and the nations by the strange beasts he had broken down. His life's goal was no longer in his reach. He wanted revenge. But he had to find them first. He found them alright. Both had been pulled apart and half eaten by the Brutes. That was when he found the portal that would lead him to the crystals where Tobi had manifested. Tobi, the person who couldn't do jutsus, was just like his son.

During the time with the crystals all he had thought about was his son and wife. When he came too he was on a beach somewhere and still able to do jutsus. It wasn't where he was that had thrown him for a loop but rather that in the sand next to him was a note from Tobi, stating that he would always be there for his dad. Madara came to conclusion that his son was alive but never accepting that Tobi had been his son. Tobi was just a memory of his child. He wasn't the real son. Just a memory of nobody now.

Tobi placed the photo back in his vest pocket and leaned against the drop ship with sad eyes._ Is Tobi just a memory of nobody, or is Tobi the memory of a real person? _

(-)

Deidara glanced down at his hands that had been sewn up after his first day with the crystals. His mouth had been healed, but when he had been infected by the crystal, he could no longer mold chakra or make bombs with them. Having large holes in his hands had broken down the layer of muscle around them that would prevent blood from leaking out. He had almost died from blood loss because of the crystal. He couldn't do jutsu, he couldn't make bombs, and he couldn't show his art to the world like he had wanted to.

"_Look at me mommy!" _Deidara held himself closer as his memories came back to him. The time he spent as a child in Iwa had once seemed like a memory he should have gotten rid of but now it was the only thing that made him feel welcome. He could still see his mother smiling down on him as he showed her his claw bird. She had told him

it was pretty and that it was art. After that he had learned to make them explode. But when the Brutes came he was powerless. The Tsuchikage, a man that was feared by all shinobi in Iwa, had fallen to the leader of the Brutes that lead the attack.

_Motherâ€| _Deidara leaned back down onto his bed and did something he hadn't done since the attack. He cried for his mother. A person he had loved for so long was gone in the blink of eye because of them. His reason for fighting them was to kill them the same way they had killed her. He would kill them with explosion like how they had. But now that it was over. That the leader that had forced them into this crazy war was now deadâ€| the memories came back hard and he knew he would forever be alone.

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Naruto's team stood around the body of Tsume as she placed inside a stasis field where she would be kept preserved until she could be buried. Rtas stood with them as well. Xedrael stood beside Yahiko and Nagato, feeling that his place was by them for their determination to stay by his son. Tsume would be buried on Sanghelios with the other Sangheili that had die today. Hinata wasn't with them however; she was still in the infirmary with Hanabi. Yugito was with her as well but no one knew whether or not the young Spartan would live.

"Tsume will be remembered for her bravery," Rtas informed them. "She shall be given a warriors burial. You have my word on that."

"I know," Yahiko replied sadly.

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Naruto and Thel both walked around the corner after crossing the light bridge. Truth lay on the ground gasping for air. They both walked up to him while John and Sasuke stared at Miranda's body. Johnson was holding her limp body. He had taken care of the spikes in her back and was just staring down at her. "Stop the rings. Save the rest." He whispered.

Naruto and Thel both stood over Truth as he looked up at them. "Can you see, Arbiter, Naruto. The moment of salvation is at hand." He told them weakly.

Thel grabbed him his long lateral neck as he glared at him. "It shall not last!" He hissed.

"Your kindâ€| never believed in the promise of the sacred rings."

"_Lies for weak. Beacons for the deluded." _Truth hissed as the Gravemind infected him.

Thel hit the button on the thick bar of metal. Gases ionized into the plasma sword with Naruto doing the same for his weapons. "Where is Rehka?" Naruto hissed as he brought his sword to the throat of the Prophet. Sasuke looked him over for a moment as Naruto and Thel held the Prophet. "Where is the last of the Chieftains that burned my world?!"

Truth looked away as the Gravemind took over again. _"He is here. Not

here, but here on this world. He will come to you in the end, Child of the Fox."_

"We shall have our revenge on a Prophetâ€| not a plague!" Thel yelled.

Truth placed a hand on Thel's wrist as Naruto brought his sword to the other side of his throat. "My feet tread the pathâ€| I shall become a God!"

"_You will be foodâ€| nothing more."_

John hit the switch to shut down the rings. Truth screamed in fury at him as he was picked up by his lateral throat. Thel stood behind him with his energy sword just inches away from his back. Naruto was at his side with his placed at the small his back. "I. Am. Truth. The voice of the Covenant!" Thel let him go for a moment before tightening his grip on his neck.

"And so you must silenced." They whispered as they drove their weapons into his back. Truth gasped as the two sword vaporized his blood. As they let his body drop to the ground the two gave out a loud roar while turning their weapons off. John gave them a quick nod while Johnson carried Miranda inside the Pelican.

Sasuke looked over at Naruto just as the ground began to shake. Laughter sounded around them as large tentacles appeared around them. Johnson ran to the cockpit of the Pelican and fired her up while the others looked around to see if they were going to attack them. John and Sasuke both looked up at the Pelican as it hovered above them for a moment. They jumped and grabbed hold of it while reaching out for Naruto and Thel. Naruto jumped up and grabbed Sasuke's hand while Thel grabbed John's. They quickly began trying to swing the other into the aft of the Pelican when a tentacle knocked them all to the ground. The Pelican dropped from their view as Flood controlled Sangheili appeared.

"_Now the gate has been unlatched. Headstones pushed aside. Corpses shift and offer room. A fate you must abide." _The Gravemind spoke happily.

Naruto and Thel readied their swords as they got back to back with the Spartans. "We trade one villain for another." Thel muttered. Naruto glanced up at the enemy before noticing that this would be pointless to fight them all. Thel was the one to voice his thoughts. "We can't fight them all. Just run!" And so they did. Naruto took point while switching to his scythe. He ran in front of Sasuke while Thel ran in front of John on the other side. They cut a path for the Spartans while they shot anything they could that was ahead of them.

John could taste blood and iron in his mouth again. His world went dark but he kept running. He couldn't stop. _"I'm a thief. But I keep what I steal!" _

Sentinels appeared to deal with the Flood as Naruto and Thel ran up the ramp with the Spartans right behind them. Naruto tried to make the lift work but I wouldn't. John and Sasuke ran past him and Thel and dropped down a dark hole at the end of the area. Naruto looked at Thel before looking back at the army of Flood. A sentinel appeared

and fired on the Flood that was making their way towards them. Naruto cursed and dropped down the hole with Thel. The Sentinels appeared and blocked the hole for them as they fell down to the bottom.

John and Sasuke hit first followed by Naruto and Thel. The two Spartans were already moved out of the way when they hit. Naruto shook off the rough landing while Thel followed John. "What is it? What do you see?" He asked. Naruto got curious and began to follow as well. John blinked as he saw Cortana appear on a panel before fading away. John narrowed his eyes as he hit the panel. The wall parted slowly showing them the gas giant between the Ark at its core. The smoke began to move and a large wall appeared. But it wasn't a wall. It was a new Halo ring. Thel blinked. "A replacement. For the ring you destroyed." He informed him.

John looked over his shoulder. "When did you know?" He hissed.

Spark appeared from the darkness in a shy way. "Just now. But I had my hopes." He explained as he flew in front of them. "What will you do?"

"Light it!"

Spark blinked. "Then we are agreed. A tactical pulse will completely eradicate the local infestation! I will personally oversee the final preparations. But it will take time to fabricate a proper Index!" Spark was already gone and yet still talking to himself as he flew away.

Thel and Naruto blinked before looking over at John. "How will you light it?" Thel asked. John looked over to where High Charity landed. Naruto blinked.

"Have fun," Naruto told him as he called for a Phantom.

26. Chapter 26

Chapter 26

Naruto blinked his eyes twice as the Spartan flew off in the Banshee that he'd been given. He was heading towards the ruins of High Charity for his AI, Cortana. Naruto honestly understood his connection to the construct. Kushina was everything to him. He would be lost without her. Without her he might as well just give up on life because she had been there for him all of his life in the Covenant. Without her we'll he'd just feel empty.

In any case, he had a job to do now.

Glancing back at the already boarded humans, Naruto honestly wondered why he was helping with the transfer. The humans were to board Shadow of Intent so the Chief could activate the Ring. Naruto was a bit skeptical about the firing of the Halo since he knew what it did now. But if it could stop the Flood, he'd try anything. They needed to be stopped more than anything. Truth was second priority to the Flood when they appeared. That was clear enough to him who the humans thought as a dangerous being.

The roar of a Phantom and its anti-gravity pods sounded above him,

moving the trees around them as the anti-gravity generators pushed them out of the way so it could lower down to the former Jinchuuriki. Its hatches opened up to reveal Xedrael, Rauk, Haer, and Ahriel. They looked pleased with the progress thus far. Naruto couldn't blame them. He was prideful in the fact that the transfer of the pink fleshed creatures was going so smoothly. They hadn't seen anything out of the ordinary just yet.

"Report," Naruto ordered.

Rauk lowered his head to a bow before speaking. "Thel has reported to us stating that we are nearly complete in securing the Dawn for the Sergeant. Once we have all the humans onboard we shall be leaving. But it will take some time to complete," there was a moment of hesitation in his final words. Naruto turned his head just a bit so it looked like he was waiting for him to finish, which he was. Rauk blinked twice before speaking. "You're mate, Hinata, requests your company. She says that it is important. It concerns your other mate, Yugito."

Naruto blinked once before his eyes flashed dangerously to the second in command of his unit. The blonde walked past him and straight into the drop ship. The Sangheili blinked as they looked at him while the hatches closed. As the Phantom rose off the ground and flew towards the looming ship above them, flying in formation with the other Phantoms and Pelicans that flew in a loose formation towards the hanger.

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John splashed down onto the organic fleshy floor that was now High Charity. It was no longer a ship. It was just a mass of stationary flesh to breed more of the parasite. With all the creatures onboard from last time, he wouldn't be surprised if any army, no, armada stood inside waiting for him. No matter what got in his way, he'd kill it. He burn it to death, tear it apart, shot it, blow it up; it didn't matter to him. He would kill them all to get her back. A promise was a promise. If he broke it and left her for dead then he'd never forgive himself for doing it. Stepping carefully over the bones of devoured Brutes and Elites, John honestly wondered if his luck was about to run out. No point in worrying about it. Checking the ammo in his shotgun, he glanced down the massive fleshy walls, puss pods that expanded and shrank like a breathing creature before making up his mind

Cortana, he thought, I'm coming. Wait just a bit longer for me.

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For all his time as a doctor he couldn't fully understand why things just went from okay, to strange, then to bad, and then straight to totally screwed. He really didn't know what to think at the moment. Actually he really couldn't think with something like an energy blade at his throat. For the most part he was just worried about what his family would think to know that someone like Naruto, who was holding the sword at his throat, killed him. Surely they wouldn't think it was dishonorable, would they?

Behind Naruto lied the problem at hand. Yugito's screams of pain

echoed throughout the entire ship. Her screams of pain weren't making anything easier for the Sangheili doctor as Naruto carefully inched the heated blade deeper and deeper into his flesh at a slow pace. The only one attempting to do anything for her pain was Hinata, who was trying administer some morphine at the moment but with Yugito's super strength, a combination of her Bijuu and Spartan training/enhancements, that was near impossible for her.

Naruto growled as his tail twitched before he turned to face his second mate. Taking one look at her nearly made him turn to cut the head of the idiot off that had already began the treatment without him being here. Just thinking about it made Naruto angry enough to kill him even more. But he had to help his mates. If she didn't calm down and let Hinata do her job she'd probably kill everyone in the room. It would be impossible for her to kill Neji and Tenten since they were already dead, but he wouldn't put it past her to have the ability to kill them again.

Five of the strongest Sangheili, this including the remaining Spartans, Haku, Konohamaru, and Sasuke all attempted to hold the screaming Jinchuuriki down. Her new furry blonde tail grabbed one of them and hurled them from one end of the infirmary to the other. Naruto blinked at the sight of her new body, not carrying that a Spartan in full armor, weighing almost a ton, had just been thrown by her tail. No. Her new body took all other matters out of his mind. Her face now adored two thin whisker marks now on each cheek, bringing her beauty to further fruition in Naruto's eyes. Her single golden blonde tail twitched angrily as it tried to help her get away. The long claws that clawed at the bed, the armor of the Spartans, just made Naruto want to claim her here and now. But the main thing that attracted him right now wasn't these changes, it were her ears and crimson slitted eyes. Eyes that were filled with lust, hatred, and fear made him tingle with anticipation to have her again. Her ears, pinned back in raw anger only made it much more invigorating.

He wanted her now. He needed her now. Her screams were causing him to feel this way. He couldn't though. Not now. Not until they were away safely. And besides, he still needed to bed Hinata again. He'd done it with Yugito twice now while only doing it with Hinata once. Even though Naruto had accepted Yugito first in terms of mating and being the true relationship, Hinata was still the first by Sangheili law. This meant that he must bed her two more times in order to make up for this so she could be higher up than Yugito.

Naruto paused in mid thought as Thel and Rtas walked in with Hidan and Tobi. Tobi was quick to make a complaint about screaming woman, to which Naruto tossed his energy sword without looking. A muttered "Ow" was the response which caused Naruto to instantly get curious. Looking over, he found that his sword had somehow gotten stuck in Hidan's chest while Tobi pointed and laughed. This was short lived as Naruto, for once not in a right mind, tossed a small energy blade at him, which dug deep into the wall behind his head. After that, Tobi was quiet, Hidan was still stuck with the sword, and Naruto was still really pissed off.

Hidan coughed as Tobi removed the weapon while Thel and Rtas looked over the screaming Jinchuuriki as she threw a heavy set Sangheili over the bed without any effort. Her legs were in the process of changing at the moment. "Was I that bad," the blonde asked seriously.

Rtas just blinked while Thel looked at him. Two signs that Naruto knew too well; if Rtas blinked more than once, which he did, the answer was an obvious yes. With Thel, it was a little different. If he looked at you, it was the sign for both a yes and no answer. The only way to tell which one it was was to actually time it. Since his head turned to him in less than three seconds, it was a yes. Anything after was a no.

Tobi was quick to hand the weapon back to Naruto as Rtas spoke to the young warrior. "We have rounded up most of the surviving humans but there is a small camp set up at the mouth of a river that have wounded," he explained in their language. Hinata blinked as they continued to speak this way. "They were just attacked by a team of Jiralhanae. We have three of our Sangheili warriors down there, but they are requesting backup now."

"I understand, but my second wife is undergoing the change and Iâ€¦" Thel raised a hand to stop him from speaking. Naruto paused as Thel looked down at her. She was now sleeping peacefully. While Naruto's logic made sense to him, their reason for needing to get this done quickly just outweighed his needs and the needs of his wives. But the young warrior was intent on staying, a clear sign of devotion that pleased Thel once more.

"I understand your reasons for wishing to stay, Uzumaki, but we must hurry and retrieve all of the humans that remain before the ring world is fired. Surely you do not wish to put your wives in danger from such a device," Thel whispered. Naruto glanced away and then down at the sleeping Jinchuuriki. He really didn't want to see her die but nor did he really wish to leave her side. Thel glanced over the AI, Kushina, as she swirled to life on a holotank. "Kushina, please speak reason to Uzumaki." Thel pleaded. She shook her head as Naruto glanced her way.

"Worry not, Arbiter," Thel flinched silently at the way Naruto spoke his title. "I shall lend the humans my help. But I will deal with it on my own."

"Out of the question," Rtas snapped. "The Flood is spreading throughout the Ark, and is quickly consuming the fallen of both sides. In a short time, they will have overrun this place. We must stop them here before they have a chance to escape. Our forces are spread too thin, and with the humans having to take things on foot at the moment, only increases the risk of getting infected or stowing one aboard. I shall not let a single Flood spore on this ship."

Naruto narrowed his eyes on the Fleetmaster before looking away. Hidan and Tobi were blinking at him as they tried to figure out what was being said. Without their helmets, they had no clue on what was being said. So they had a reason to be somewhat confused when Naruto sent them a sadistic grin.

(-)

John ran without looking back. If he did look back, he'd turn and fight. He couldn't fight. Not now. There were too many of them, even for him. The combined roar of the Infected Elites, Brutes, Grunts, and Humans was deafening. It made him run faster. He had to run. That was all he could do now.

He ran around the corner, his hand grabbing the fleshy wall to keep him from falling into the murky water beneath his feet. He turned straight into the arms of an Infected Brute that grabbed him into a bear hug. He squeezed him hard, but John used all of his strength to break loose, tearing one of the arms away from its body before he raised his pistol straight into the Flood Spore that was in its body. He fired twice into it, then two more shots into the odd head it now possessed. It dropped dead with spike grenades spilling out of its pouches.

John grabbed a handful of them, thumbing them each, and hurled them straight into the wall before taking off down the hallway. Several dull thumps sounded behind him, momentarily drowning out the roar of the creatures behind him. A moment later, the roars sounded again. He hadn't killed all of them, but he'd obviously killed a lot of them. He came to a stop at the corner of a wall, his assault rifle coming up to bear.

Thirty Infected Brute and Humans charged him with pistols, assault rifles, plasma rifles, and brute shots. John opened up on them at the last second, one handed firing his rifle as he reached behind his back to grab his shotgun. His rifle ran out. He pulled the shotgun off his back, leveling on the chest of a Brute. He fired. It collapsed in two pieces from the concussive force and from the rounds the ripped through his body. John flipped his shotgun under his armpit, clapping it tightly as he reloaded it while bring his pistol up into the face of two more Infected Humans that came charging at him with knives.

He brought the shotgun up into the face of a Brute that came charging on all fours. He fired with both weapons, reloading the shotgun the same way while he emptied his pistol. They kept coming though. He kept firing until he was out of ammo for his shotgun. He fired the last pistol round before dropping the gun to the ground. A crazed Infected Human ran at him, knife in hand. John jumped to the side, dodging the stab attack. He grabbed the arm, gave it a twist, taking the whole arm away from the body. John spun the arm in his hands and slammed it through the creatures' chest. It went down. Two more came at him. He kicked a fallen brute shot into his hands. He fired three times into the chests before they dropped.

John blinked, looking for targets. He found none.

John was hurdled backwards into a room by something. His body slammed up against a slab of metal that hadn't been overtaken by Gravemind. Looking up, he found what had pulled him in. A long tentacle waved about, attracting others to his presence. Behind them were eighty or more infected warriors. John blinked and got to his feet, his hands reaching for his shotgun. He took a quick glance at the ammo reading. He had twelve shots left. He took one more glance at the six tentacles that waved around, all ready to strike at him, and the eighty or more Infected Humans, Grunts, Brutes, and Elites.

He could kill them all. This would be nothing but a walk in the park for him.

(-)

"INCOMING!" Dustin shouted as more and more Brutes charged them with

Wraith tanks, Ghosts, and Prowlers. A barrage of spikes and plasma rounds clashed with the tracer and plasma rounds from the humans and Elites that were fighting to keep the wounded safe as the Phantoms and Pelicans dropped off the first batch of survivors onto the _Shadow of Intent_. They didn't have enough to grab them all, and they were forced to remain behind until they could get them all.

"KEEP SHOOTING! JUST KEEP SHOOTING!" Sergeant Scarlet shouted. She raised her battle rifle up as more and more Brutes charged them. She fired straight into their ugly faces with her ODST friends and Marine and Navy buddies. The wounded were even trying fight which everyone was happy about.

Three Elites jumped over the wall of sandbags, duel energy swords drawn as they charged the Brutes on foot. They met and an epic battle once again ensued. Bodies were broken, weapons were sliced apart, magazines were dropped and inserted, and blood covered the once green landscape. Banshees soared overhead, dropping green tear shaped balls of death on them. The earth heated and cooled. Bodies were melted and skin blistered but they kept firing. This wouldn't break them. Not now. Not when they were this close to victory. The day that everyone had thought would never come was almost here. They're mouths already salivated with the sweet taste of victory that was close at end. The Elites broke their lines, slashing through the Brutes, Jackals, and Grunts with ease. They broke limbs, snapped necks, and stole energy weapons as the bodies piled up. The Brutes broke their charge and retreated, leaving their Grunt and Jackal allies behind to give them cover. They were no match for the three Elites who cut and snapped them apart.

As the last of the Jackals were killed, an ODST with a Texan drawl shook his head while saying, "They aren't that tough," as he checked his pistol again. He had killed two things: A Grunt and a Brute. The Brute was lying on the ground dead with a straight razor jammed in its jugular and a large hole in the side of face where a single pistol round had torn straight through it left eye. His helmet had a set of teeth around the faceplate, and his codename, Foxy, was stenciled on his chest. He was the medic, and he loved his job for all its worth.

"You shouldn't brag, Foxy," Tundra, another young man with a Texan drawl in his voice, stated coolly. Despite being only fourteen, hardly an age to be fighting, he had been one of the few from the Outer Colonies to fight and survive against the Covenant at such a young age. An ONI Spook came and greeted him, asked him if he wanted to fight. He signed right up, ignoring the age limits and everything else in between. He, like Foxy, had a style to his own helmet. Foxy, like his name, suggested, was crafty, witty, and just downright evil at times. He had spray painted a pink flame job on the side of his helmets while under the influence of fifteen beers one day. Tundra never complained. He just accepted it.

"And why the hell not, homo," he asked playfully. Because of his pink flame job, Tundra had been accused of being gay. Though it was never proven, the ODST had one thing that all ODSTs shared: Guts and insanity. He chose to stick with the helmet not out of ignorance, but out of disrespect for Foxy. Foxy thought Tundra was gay, and Tundra thought Foxy was an idiot. The two got along in their own unique way, but to the untrained eye, it just looked like they hated each

other.

"Would you pipe down," Scarlet shouted, her tomboyish voice booming from the confines of her helmet. It never helped much, but Scarlet, for all her skills as a leader, fighter, and her crazy impulses, was still just a female in the eyes of those around her. That was until she got mad. Then she proved that woman could be just as scary as men when she'd lift a table three times heavier and bash someone with it once. The two shook their heads as they went back to watching the field for any movement. Scarlet sighed inwardly as she looked over the newly dead. "Eliot, Church, Brad, get the wounded and move them back with the others. Rick, Jake, Jack, get the tags from the dead and their ammo. We may need it." They gave off crisp salutes before doing their task.

The Elites came back carrying plasma weapons while a Phantom roared overhead with a Pelican following it. A tank was attached to the back of the Pelican and dropped off at the edge of the small camp, if you could call it a camp. Johnson jumped out of it with a lit cigar in his mouth. He took one drag from it before looking at the wounded. This was too much. They were all pumped with the idea that they'd won already when they'd forget just where they were, what was still out there, and what was now possible trying to get off the insane world.

"Where's the other platoons," he asked seriously.

"Wasted, Sergeant," Scarlet explained sadly.

"And we will be too, sir, if we don't get the hell out of here now!" Eliot added. Johnson grabbed him by the front of his vest and yanked him to his face to stare into the faceplate of his helmet. He could hear the man gulp at his own actions.

"Are you hit," The man shook his head dumbly while Scarlet wondered if team killing now was a bad thing. "Then listen up," Johnson growled as Deidara, Tobi, and Hidan got out of the Pelican with the Spartans. "When I joined the Corp we didn't have any fancy smancy tanks. We had a stick; two sticks and a rock for a whole platoon. And we had to share the rock with the platoon. Buck up boy, you're one lucky Marine," he explained happily.

"Awesome speech, sir," Foxy shouted as he finished patching up a wounded Marine.

"Shut up, kiss ass," Tundra growled. Foxy shot him the finger as a witty reply.

"I think that speech was really fucked up," Hidan commented offhand.

Johnson chewed on the butt of his cigar as he looked Hidan over. He had a big grin on his face. "Well then, maybe you'll like a more religious approach to it, Holyman." This got the Jashin worshiper's attention. "You see, usually the good lord works in mysterious ways, but not today. This here," he slapped one of the tanks' massive sets of armor plating over the tank treads, "is sixty-sixty tons of straight up, divine intervention. If God is love, then you can call me Quipped."

Hidan glanced at the tank, then the Spartan that was crawling inside, Konohamaru, and then uttered a low, "Meh," as he walked past the Sergeant Major who rolled his cigar around in his mouth.

Scarlet was about to say something when the Scorpion Tank suddenly opened fire. "Get the injured loaded up," she bellowed as the Marines all opened fire on the approaching Brutes and Grunts. Jackals hanged back and began sniping at them with Beam Rifles. "Xarkun, use the explosives! Tundra, take out the snipers! Foxy, cover the medics as they get the last of the wounded onboard!"

"To arms my brothers!" Rhi yelled as his energy swords hissed to life.

"Time to turn the once peaceful forest into a giant smoking crater," Xarkun said with a laugh as he thumbed the detonation stick.

(-)

John jumped out of the way, splashing down into the murky flesh/water of the floor as hundreds of crystal, spike, tracer, and plasma rounds flew through the air. Infected Grunts, Elites, Brutes, and Humans were pinning him down as he made his way through the long hallway of flesh and metal that was once High Charity. It wasn't as bad as the report had said when he skimmed it over. To him, things actually seemed more—| weaker than what they could have been. It wasn't as weak as what he'd have liked, but it was weak enough for him to run, gun, snap, and smash his way through the horde of infected beings.

He knew that this was a direct result of the crash landing that the ship suffered from and because most of its forces were away trying to consume everything on the Ark. It made sense to him really when he thought about the first attempt. With it in space they had no way to get out of the place without being frozen by the void of space and without taking a ship that would just get vaporized the moment it left the hanger.

He shields recharged. He took out two frag grenades, primed them, took a deep breath, and then pumped them twice before throwing them into the air. They bounced off the fleshy wall and stuck to the ground in between a group of weakened infected Elites. Two dull thumps sounded followed by a collection of roars and groans. He spun around the corner, his shotgun pointed down range and into the face of an Infected Grunt. He fired once into its bony face, pumped his shotgun, fired into the gut of a wounded Infected Jackal, pumped it again, and fired into the face of an Infected Brute. He looked for more targets.

None.

He ran straight down the long path of fleshy hallway, rounded a corner, reloaded his shotgun, stopped at a wall, counted to three, and then spun around it with his gun up. Once again he found nothing. They were getting smarter, and the voices were getting more annoying.

Motion blurred over his motion detector. Ten—| no fifty enemy signatures appeared around him. He gripped his shotgun tighter,

placing his hand prints into it the handles as Spores, Infected Humans, and a Thrasher appeared. They circled him. John saw and opening. He grabbed a plasma grenade from his belt and tossed into the face of the Thrasher. It stuck. It blinked at the grenade. A flash of thunder and lightning boomed into existence. John's faceplate polarized instantly to block the intensity of the bright light before he ran. He didn't look back as the others began to give chase.

John grunted as he threw his last plasma grenade at a fleshy door/wall. It stuck and a moment later the door was liquefied into chunks of red and green jelly. John ran at full sprint and jumped inside it as he dropped his last two fragmental grenades to the ground. Two booms ripped through the air with the combined screams of the creatures behind him.

John was quick to get to his feet. He glanced back at the two plumes of smoke from his bombs. A silhouette appeared in the smoke. He pulled his assault rifle off his back and fired it one handed style until the thing went down. He kept both weapons out as he looked the place over. Nothing else could be seen.

He blinked as his head suddenly began to throb. _"I have walked the edge of the abyss! I have seen your future and I have learnedâ€¦!" _Cortana's words echoed into his mind just as the place began to rumble.

"_**SUBMIT! End her torment and my own!" **_

(-)

Thunder cracked to life. The gun fire was drowned out by the subsonic blast as the explosive shredded the once peaceful forest into splinters and flying flames. Broken bodies were thrown all around, some landing as far back as the base camp while others were thrown straight into the air and then dropped down on all forces, some of them dying when bigger objects, namely the Brutes, landed down on them.

But this didn't stop the hundreds of crazed Grunts or Brutes that rushed them. The Elites weren't detoured either. They rushed head strong enough the enemy ranks, energy swords drawn, and plasma rifles held high as they cut, tore, and shot their way through the enemy ranks.

Haku growled as he sighted down the scope of his sniper rifle, targeting hiding Jackals with beam rifles and carbines that were trying to pick them off as the last of the Pelicans and Phantoms flew away with the wounded from the previous battle. The _Dawn_ hovered overhead, close to where the _Intent_ was stationed. Its weapons blazed to life as plasma from beam rifles began flying at the two snipers. Tundra kept his head down, Haku stood up, firing back; running as he did to dodge the shots. Two shots were more precious than the others. One tore through his shoulder, spinning him around while another shredded his left hand apart. This didn't stop the Spartan. He reloaded his weapon with hand as he dove for cover as the _Dawn_ began hammering down on the more important targets, namely the Wraith Tanks.

Archer missiles blew them apart while the Scorpion tank pulverized

the approaching Hunters that made their way to them at a slow pace. Behind these two Hunters stood the scariest thing to any infantry unit; two Scarabs. The sheer sight alone made even the toughest of ODS'Ts wanna cry. Pelicans that were on return opened fire on the Scarabs, mostly hoping to draw them away. The two Scarabs paid them no mind, letting the missiles slam against their hulking frames like insects on a windshield.

The _Intent _sprang to life, its front plasma turrets glowing bright red, making it look like an angry fish in clear water. Over the radio, Scarlet heard the voices of several people. _"Targeted," _Konan, Nagato, Mikoto, and Yahiko said in unison.

"â€|_and firing!" _Naruto and Rtas shouted in unison as well as the _Intent _fired down on the two Scarabs. Beams of plasma punched through their thick armor like a hot knife through hot butter. The ground was glassed and the ocean around the beams turned to vapor as the two scariest walking units to man were cut clean in half. The melting metal spilled onto the ground, furthering the glassing process on the ground. Enemy forces that were around the hot metal were burned or glassed if they walked near or into the hot metal.

"We did it!" Xarkun exclaimed. A Hunter appeared out of the smoke, half of its armor melted or broken away from its body. It was charging them. More to the point, it was charging towards Tundra as he went back to sniping. Xarkun ran towards his friend, Foxy screaming for Tundra to move out of the way. He didn't listen. Xarkun appeared in front of him, shoving him out of the way just as the Hunter grabbed a hold of his arm and tore it off. Xarkun managed to save his friend, but he couldn't save himself from the fuel rod that was leveled straight at his face. He saw green, his family, and his life on the Outer Colonies in a flash before all went dark.

Tundra was thrown back by the blast, his left hand clutching the stump that was now his right arm. The Hunter bellowed with rage as it ran at him. It stopped, collapsed, gasped, and died. Tundra turned over, gritting his teeth through the pain as a figure in white appeared. Naruto had stopped it before it could kill him. Banshees zoomed in overhead, each releasing bright green tear drops of plasma towards their position.

"Do it," Naruto ordered. Tundra closed his eyes, waiting for his death. Subsonic booms ripped through the air around him. He felt no heat. He felt only more pain. Opening his eyes, he noticed he was still alive, and he was in a protective barrier. A bubble shield, only magnified, had protected them. Naruto gave a quick nod to Hinata who was now beginning medical duties on the wounded from the current skirmish. "Protect her with your life," Naruto ordered to the four Sangheili behind him. They all nodded and ran to Hinata, each drawing their energy swords. The former Jinchuuriki ran straight at the approaching enemy, his katanas out and at the ready.

(-)

Zing, for all his mighty powers as an Unggoy, felt even more powerful at the moment. He felt like he could take on the world and do it with his own two hands. His Goddess was in danger. _Their _Goddess was in danger and in need of some saving. Reaching up to the controls, his stubby little fingers thumbed and drummed over switches, pressed

orbs, and rotated spheres as the other one hundred Unggoy that all crammed into the _slightly _destroyed Phantom's aft section to save and rescue their Goddess.

Looking over his shoulder, he could see them all stacked on each other, all with eager looks in their eyes as the one Anti-Gravity pod began to hum to life. They would save their Goddess, and they would show their nipple brothers the way of healing, just like their Goddess had done for them.

His signal unit suddenly began screaming as Chichi's annoying voice sounded over it. _"What in the name of the Gods are you doing!" _he screamed.

Almost as if it had been rehearsed, the other Unggoy in the aft, along with Zing, all began chanting, "Protect the Goddess!" as one big group. The Phantom screeched along the metal hanger, forcing Sangheili and Humans to move out of the way a Phantom filled to the rim with religiously crazed Unggoy that were on a mission. They were on a mission to save Hyuuga Hinata from the sinners known only as the Jiralhanae and Kig-Yar.

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"You have got to be kidding me," Rtas said again. Now he had seen it all. Now he could just honestly say that and mean it. "Are you serious?" He asked. Chichi wasn't sure if he was being serious or not, but decided to keep his mouth shut just in case his answer was a wrong one. Rtas paid him no mind though. He was more focused on the image of the smoking, swerving, and wreckage of a Phantom that was flying in the air, dropping out of the air, and then gaining altitude with a bunch of crazed Unggoy as the pilots and crew. _Well, _he thought, _we may be tough, brave, and even determined. But that, _he continued to watch in amazement as the Phantom lost parts, burst into flames, and crashed straight into the ground after doing a nosedive to come to a stop, _is just too crazy for us or the Human Demons.

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Naruto blinked in his eyes at the sight. They were lucky there were no more enemies in the area, or they'd have a perfect chance to take them out. He started at the wreckage of the Phantom as a piece was pushed aside. Out of the wreckage stood a single, somewhat bloody, Unggoy with a plasma pistol, and it looked pissed. Naruto raised his energy swords as it dropped down and made a charge towards the slightly stunned Hinata. Once it got in front of her, it stopped, sniffed, and then turned to the downed ship. "Goddess is safe," he declared. A cry of joy sounded as a mass of Unggoy came out of the down ship, some sporting injuries, others carrying fallen comrades, and all of them happy to see their Goddess safe.

The Humans and Sangheili blinked at this, all of them turning to face one another with the same question on their minds that Naruto instantly voiced. "What the fuck just happened," he asked seriously. The Unggoy all formed a protective circle around Hinata as more Phantoms appeared to take up the wounded and get them to safety. Naruto plucked one out of the crowd and hoisted him up to his faceplate. "What," he began slowly, "is going on here?" he asked.

The Unggoy in his hands narrowed its tiny red on him as it answered. "We here to protect Goddess," it answered angrily. "Stay away from Goddess. Or wraith you'll feel from us," it added. Naruto understood why it was here now, and why it was so determined now. Maybe he could use that to his advantage. Supposing someone with white eyes decided to cooperate with his ideas.

"PROTECT THE GODDESS!" one of them cried just as an auto grenade went flying into its face.

"Oh my stars and garters," its friend cried as it returned fire on the approaching Jiralhanaes.

Another Unggoy was killed by a plasma round to the face beside another Unggoy that could only scream, "You killed Flip-Yap! Or Yap-Flip was he? It was Yap-Flip! no, Flip-Yap was his brother. Don't tell me I don't Flip-Yap! Flip-Yap and I went to Nipple Academy!"

"Shut up!" Scarlet screamed as she went back to firing on the approaching enemies. Unggoy stood beside her; firing their plasma pistols, needlers, and even plasma rifles at the Jiralhanae. Unggoy that were out in the approaching army stopped short at seeing their nipple brothers fighting beside the Humans. Those close enough to hear them screaming their chant stopped entirely and looked back to see a mass of their brothers protecting a woman in a white coat. They blinked as explosions sounded closer to them. One of them was shot and the human knelt down to check on it.

That settled it in their eyes. The Unggoy that were working with the Jiralhanae turned around and started firing on their former allies.

Naruto ran straight towards the Jiralhanae Chieftains that were leading the attack; Haer, Rauk, Xedrael, and Ahriel one step behind him. They cut their way through the approaching armada, not breaking stride as they did until they were upon the real threat. Naruto charged Rehka, the largest Chieftain here. He wasn't hard to miss. He was the only one that stood a good two or the three heads taller than the others, and he was the only one to ever use a giant sword for a weapon. They split up, Naruto taking on Rehka while the others dealt with the other ten Chieftains.

The former Jinchuuriki lunged straight at him, his twin katanas out and ready to stab him. Rehka jumped back, avoiding the lung. Naruto went the motion of his attack, and rolled away just as Rehka brought an elbow down to strike him. The blond was back on his feet as the massive Chieftain attempted to step on him. Naruto swung straight as his gut with his sword, aiming to spill his guts. Rehka grabbed him by the wrist before he could spill his guts. The massive hand began to crush his armor around his arm, making Naruto wince in pain before he was thrown into a tree.

"So weak," Rehka's loud voice boomed. Naruto got back to his feet, his armor around his left arm breaking apart as a safety mechanism kicked in. The blond haired warrior growled in annoyance as the Chieftain laughed at him. Naruto ran straight at him again, both swords straight out. Rehka reached up, grabbing the long hilt of his large sword. He unsheathed it quickly and parried Naruto's attack.

Without any effort, he raised his left leg and kicked Naruto away. Naruto crashed into a large set of boulders with a bone jarring crack. His armor cracked from the two blows and was soon stripped away at the chest and back. His helmet hissed and broke apart shortly after. "You are weak, just like your people," Rehka announced. "They cried for mercy as we tore them apart."

The Uzumaki child slowly got up, his body shaking from the blows. "I'm," he coughed up blood as Rehka delivered a hard punch to his gut that sent him over the boulders and face down into the ground. Rehka jumped over the boulders and ran at Naruto, his sword pointed straight out at him. The blond rolled over and got up. He clutched his stomach just he took a knee. He failed to see that Rehka was upon him, his sword nearing its way to his gut. The blond suddenly felt something push him. He rolled along the ground and slammed into a down tree that cracked as he hit it.

"So pathetic," he muttered as he flung his sword in Naruto's direction. A speeding blur slammed into him, and knocked him into the ground. Purple blood stained his hands. Naruto stared at it and then the creature on his chest. Xedrael was lying on top of him, his armor caved in around his chest, and a hole punched clean through his chest. "You can die with the abomination you brought to our Covenant, Hieratic."

Naruto grasped his adopted father's shoulders, shaking him slightly to see if he still lived. Xedrael blinked his eyes tiredly. He lived. "Son," he whispered. Naruto blinked. His voice was hoarse, and his body began leaking more blood. "Pleaseâ€¦ liveâ€¦" he dropped a metal rod on the ground. It was his energy sword.

"Father?" No reply came from him. Xedrael, his adopted father, now lay dead in his arms. Naruto wanted to cry, he wanted to leave the battlefield and take him with him in hopes of saving him. But the laughter from Rehka made him nothing but angry. Rauk, Haer, and Ahriel were thrown back to where Naruto was, their bodies slamming against the tree with enough force to nearly break their backs.

"Like father," Rehka appeared with the remaining two Chieftains in preparation to kill them. "Like son," he raised the weapon above his head and brought it down. A sniper round, knocked his sword off course and made it slam into the ground. "WHAT!"

(-)

Hanabi leaned over, her body protesting at her actions. She was onboard _Shadow of Intent_ and was over the survivors. The Phantoms had picked them all up say for the Unggoy and ODSTs that were dealing with a new threat. She had been ordered to stay on the ship since her armor was damaged and would not allow her to fight the Flood that was now swarming around the camp. _Kill him good, _she thought before blacking out. She collapsed into the arms of a Sangheili doctor that was quick to take her back to the safety of the Infirmary.

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Rehka growled as he picked his weapon back up. He failed to notice that Naruto had picked up his father's energy sword. "Once I'm done with you, I'll finish what the Prophets ordered!"

"No you won't," Naruto growled. He thumbed both his father's energy sword and his own. Ionized gasses hissed to life as the two energy swords exploded outwardly. "I'll take you all on!" Naruto shouted as he spun around, slashing into the armor of Rehka. The Chieftain jumped back from the swung while the closet Chieftain lunged towards Naruto. The angry blond spun around his hammer, slashing at his right arm. He cut it off and swung his other energy sword straight into his back, destroying his armor on his back. Naruto spun once more, stabbing his energy sword into the knee of the other Chieftain before backhanding him away. He ran at Rehka as he swung his sword. Naruto ducked under the swung, reached up, and stabbed him in the chest. The Jiralhanae screamed with pain before he knocked Naruto away.

The angry blond didn't stop. He grabbed a hold of the first Chieftain and tore his arm off with a single tug and then stabbed it through its chest, killing it instantly. The other reached out for him, but Naruto cut the arm off, leaving the creature howling in pain. Naruto kicked it in the back of the leg, forcing it to take a knee. He stabbed his sword into its face, jumped into the air, landing on its back, and tore the face apart with all his strength before kicking the now dead Jiralhanae to the ground.

"Worthless bastard!" he stated angrily as he ran towards the angered Chieftain. Naruto drew both energy sword again as Rehka raised his massive sword again. Naruto blinked as he stared at his own sword. It was smaller than his father's energy sword, but still had the same shape. He felt water in his eyes as he glanced back at his dead father. He was dead this time. There was no mistaking it. _Father, _he thought sadly.

"Die!" Naruto snapped out of his trance, turned, and jumped away as Rehka attempted to stab him. The blond got back to his feet quicker than Rehka had expected and was slashed across the chest. He retorted with the same thing to Naruto, the only difference being that Naruto was thrown backwards by his attack. Rehka coughed up blood. Naruto's swords had done more damage than expected. The two stared each other down, both with anger in their eyes. "You are a Demon in true form," Rehka growled as he charged Naruto.

Naruto tossed his own energy sword away and tightened his grip on his father's energy sword. "You are a monster with now honor," he shouted back as he charged him. The two meet in the center, both weapons meeting as they trusted them at each other. Dark red blood splashed against the ground. Naruto coughed up blood as Rehka stabbed him through the stomach. Rehka gave him a bloody grin as he coughed up blood. Naruto smiled suddenly as Rehka's face twisted into pain.

(-)

John blinked his tired eyes as he reached down, touching the rim of the holotank. A tiny figure that lay in the center of it was curled up into a ball, its body dimly lit. The mathematics that raced down its body far slower than it originally did. The Spartan looked it over, his heart racing with happiness. She was alive but she looked confused, sad, and maybe even sick. But he made it back. He kept his promise to her.

She began to cry. "You found me." John dropped to his knees, placing

the chin of his helmet down onto his folded arms. "But so much of me is wrong," she continued. "Out of placeâ€¦ you might be too late." Rampancy, no doubt about it. She was questioning herself, uncertain of her own memories, their time together. Now he felt bad. He hadn't got here in time.

He tapped his hand against his wrist. He came here for her. He wouldn't give up now. He would lose her now. "You know me," he whispered closely to her. "When I make a promiseâ€¦"

She suddenly began to bright up, her mathematical images coursing faster down her body. "â€¦youâ€¦ keep it." Her face twisted back into the smile, the look, and she held the tone in her voice like she used to have. "I do know how to pick 'em."

She was back. He felt a chuckle in his throat. "Lucky me. Do you still have it?" She blinked; her mind working at its usual speed again as she stood up, her hands pushing off of her knees. The motions alone displayed her tiredness. Even for an AI, she was getting tired. Her time spent cracking into Covenant Tech, downloading Forerunner data, and splitting herself apart for helping him during his mission.

"The activation in Index from the first Halo ring," she raised her right hand, the Index appearing from her palm. John smiled. He knew he could count on her. She didn't let him down. She pulled through for him so many times that he was worried that she might have slipped just this once. But no, she had yet to do it. "A little souvenir I held ontoâ€¦ just in case." She assured him a moment later. She had a twinkle in her eyes as she said that. She looked around the room she was in. It was dark, barely visible for her with the cameras and speakers she had been using for her time with the Gravemind. John looked around as well. He hadn't been paying attention. He could have been killed by a single Flood Spore and he wouldn't have known about it with his mind so focused on her. She suddenly blinked. "Got an escape plan," she asked, even though she knew his answer.

John reached up, taking the chip from the back of his helmet and putting it front of her image as he said, "Thought I'd try shooting my way out. Mix things up a bit." He knew that she knew he had a smile on his face. She placed her hand on it, her image flickering before the chip began to glow. He inserted it into the back of his helmet, his head being filled with cold liquid that poured straight into his mind. His head hurt for a moment before fading. He looked around, happy to have her back in his mind.

"Just keep your head down," she ordered. "There's two of us in here now remember?"

(-)

"Use your eyes! No one sleeps but me!" A Brute yelled before a sniper round tore the side of its face off. The Jackals that were around it were quickly put down as well by sniper fire.

"Well," Foxy drawled, "that was a load of fun. Who's up for round two?" he asked hopefully. Scarlet punched him in the back of the head, knocking him to the ground as Tundra was airlifted out of the area. The wounded were taken up to the _Shadow of Intent _while those that could still fight were left down on the ground to defend the

location. The dead were left in the camp to be picked up last so they didn't waste anything. If they had to leave them they would.

"Be quiet," she ordered in a whisper. Foxy was about to make a retort when a combined scream that sounded like agonizing cries of pain sounded from within the forest. "Now what," she groaned. A green mist poured out of the forest, and the cries got worse. "What is that?"

Silhouettes appeared in the mist. Creatures appeared, some small, some large. Tiny shadows moved along the ground, scurrying over corpses and bring them back to life. Elites that stood beside the humans growled angrily as their second enemy appeared. "It's the Flood!"

"Oh that's just great." Foxy shouted angrily as he raised his pistol. The combined forces opened fire on them; destroying their bodies and making them stack on top of each other until they were forced to climb over them. Hundreds more appeared, the dead came back to life. "Damn it all!" Foxy shouted.

"Destroy them all!" a Sangheili screamed as he leapt over the barricade and charged the enemy. They cut and blasted their way through the mindless undead known as the Flood. Those that died were quickly consumed as the Flood slowly descended upon them, consuming everything they touched. Humans and Elites were infected. The Scorpion tank and the Spartans began firing on the approaching threat as Banshees swooped in releasing tear drops of green plasma that liquefied the enemy. Phantom dropped down, picking up those that it could.

"Scarlet," Dustin yelled. She turned to face him, finding a Flood Spore already digging at his chest. "Get out of here. All of you get out of here!"

"Kimimaro," Deidara shouted as the others began firing to protect the Lieutenant. "We need to fall back!"

"Fall back everyone!" Elites and Grunts shouted in unison. "We can't fight them all!" Thunder echoed over the land as the trees suddenly flattened. The Flood were thrown the ground. Red covered the sky. The Pelicans and Phantoms were tossed around from the sudden uproar of wind that lifted Wraith tanks and Hunter corpses into the air and then dropped them onto the ground. As the Flood got back up, so did the Elites, Grunts, and Humans. "What was that just now?" A red blur tore through the army of Flood before fading away. Everyone turned to where the thing had come from. Everyone blinked at the sight alone.

"It's Naruto," Mikoto whispered.

(-)

Naruto blinked his tired eyes. Blood pooled around his body. He felt cold for once in his life. But he was happy. Looking over to his left he could see the corpse of Rehka, stabbed by his father's energy sword. _Father,_ he cringed in pain as he reached up, clutching the massive sword that was still embedded in his gut. Rehka, at the last second, had stabbed him into the ground just before Naruto stabbed the energy sword into his heart. _I knowâ€¦ the things I've doneâ€¦

may not change anything. I know that things will never be the way we wanted them to be. _Images of his time in Konoha appeared. Images of his friends on Sanghelios flashed through his mind as well. _Even so, I have avenged my people of Konoha. Iâ€¦ I don't curse you, Namikaze Minato, for your actions against me. I thinkâ€¦ I would have done the same thing if I was in your shoes. _He smiled a bloody smile. _Nowâ€¦ I can join you three, father, Minato, and mother. _

"You can't die yet," something whispered in his mind. A clear white room replaced the forest he was in. He remembered this place. It was where the Kyuubi used to be. Devoid of the cage he once slept in, this was all that remained. Footsteps sounded around him as his vision adjusted to three shadows above him. "I ordered you to live, didn't I?" Xedrael stood above him, along with Minato, and his mother Kushina. She was smiling down on him.

"Father," Minato reached down, picking him up slowly. "Not you," Naruto growled as he shoved him away. Minato looked hurt by this, but reached out to him again. Naruto brushed his hand away as he walked towards Xedrael. "Father, I'm sorry but I'm just soâ€¦ soâ€¦ tired." He collapsed into his arms.

"We know you are," Kushina whispered. Naruto blinked as he looked her over. Dark red hair that ended at the small of her back was neatly groomed. She had green eyes, and a smile that instantly made him wanna cry. He wouldn't cry, not now. She was dressed in a simply orange shinobi uniform with a metal headband wrapped around her waist. She looked ready to cry. "Naruto, you can't die yet. I know you're tired. I know you're angry with me, with your father," she motioned to Minato with a gentle wave. Naruto ignored it, and clung harder to Xedrael. "But your people need you now. You have to put aside your hatred for them. I know they did you wrong. I know they hated you for something beyond your control. And I know you found a purpose with these people. But you have to stand by our peopleâ€¦ just one more time."

"I don't wanna," Xedrael suddenly smiled and laughed at Naruto's childish voice. How he'd longed to hear it again. "I hate them. I hate all of them for what they did to me!"

"Son," Xedrael looked down on him, his eyes showing his concern, his pain, and still showing his love for the boy. "I know they hurt you. I saw them hurt you. But can you honestly tell me that you hate them all?"

"I hate all of them. They hurt me. I will kill them all in the end."

"What about Hinata, Yugito, or your human teammates? Do you hate them?" Minato asked seriously. Naruto looked away. "You can't go around hating everyone for no reason. They had nothing to do with what happened to you back in the village. I know you loved the village. You loved the Sandaime Hokage. I know you loved everything about the village. And I know you still do." Minato reached out, his left hand glowing with red energy. "I know you hate me, but understand, as father to son, I'm giving you back what power I stole from the Kyuubi in an effort to keep you safe. That's all I wanted. Curse me all you want for making you a Jinchuuriki. But I loved the village just as much as everyone else did. So pleaseâ€¦ hate only me. And love the others that remain." Naruto felt a pain stab into his

stomach.

"Nowâ€¦ LIVE!"

Naruto gasped as his holy powers brought him back to the forest. Red energy spewed out of him, destroying the weapon that pinned him down. His wounds healed, and his cloak formed again. The young warrior was quick to get back to his feet, pausing only to look at the body of Xedrael. _"But can you honestly tell me that you hate them all?" _Naruto closed his eyes, his nine-tails, eight being made from his holy power and the one real one went limp.

_No, _images of his time with Hinata and Yugito appeared in his mind. _I can honestly say I do love a few of them. _He glanced up, staring straight at his comrades that stared at him with slacked jaws. Without a word, Ahriel knelt down, an arm placed over his chest. _I have a reason to come back. I made a promise, and I'll keep my promise to the three of you. _He smiled as he suddenly remembered his reason for fighting again.

****Flashback****

"Naruto," Yugito rolled over onto his chest as the _Shadow of Intent _continued its journey through the portal. "One of the Sangheili Doctors told me something interesting today. Do you wanna know what it is?" Naruto blinked as he stared at her. She grinned as she slid his hand down from her breasts to her belly. "They said I was pregnant, but we haven't been together for that long yet."

Naruto snorted. "Sangheili medical technology is more advanced than your idiot doctors, I suppose. We can usually tell within a day or three after the consummation has been done. It's no wonder they'd wanna have you checked. But out of curiosity, who made you do it?" He could think of two people at the moment. The first was his dad, Xedrael. He'd enjoy knowing he'd have grandkids on the way to train. He'd enjoy that, just as much as he enjoyed making Naruto eat the dirt back on the beaches of Sanghelios. The other was Rtas. He'd do it just to state that Naruto needed to marry her now.

"Thel," she replied happily as Naruto continued to rub her stomach.

"I'll kick his ass," he whispered as he pulled her down onto his bare chest. Hinata was sleeping beside them at the moment, and Naruto smiled again. _She'll be tested in a few days as well. Human or not, I do love them. Whether it is just a mistake on my part or not, I will protect you both. I will protect our futures. And I will come back to you all. I promise. _

****Flashback ends****

Naruto looked the Sangheili over, determining their worthiness for battle. They were bleeding; their armor was chipped and broken. They were tired. "Rise," he commanded. They stood up without hesitation. "Take Xedrael to the camp. Wait for transport. I will finish this battle here and now." They moved without words, and slowly picked up the body of Onalerl Xedrael. "I, Onalerl Uzumaki Naruto, will finish the fight. Protect his body, and my wife."

He dropped to all fours and ran towards the Flood that was making

their way to the camp. With a single flick of his arm, red energy flew off it, tearing into the bodies of the mindless undead that were slow to get back up. Both sides turned to see Naruto rushing them with his two energy swords drawn. He cut a path through them, burning bodies with his holy powers. Tendrils of red energy pierced the mindless undead that ran straight at him. They saw him as a greater threat than that of the Humans or Elites.

Naruto skidded backwards to where he was front of the barricade and sandbags with his powers drained down to five tails (Four chakra tails and one real tail) and standing tall and strong in front of the Sangheili and ODSs. He gave out a quick bark to the Unggoy that were slow to move until they saw his crimson orbs glaring at them. Fake or not, they were scary enough to get them moving and quickly began lobbing grenades at the approaching threat. Sangheili soon joined in, and were quickly followed by the Humans that threw grenades and fired rockets straight into the horde of enemies. Thunder and lightning flashed and boomed as the explosives destroyed bodies and glassed the earth.

Naruto grinned as he raised both arms above his head and then slung them out towards the enemy. Two transparent arms with massive paw crushed and burned the enemy until they were nothing but a mass of green clumps of flesh or just dried up smoldering clumps of blackened meat. The massive Flood creatures came barreling out of the green mist like giant demons. Everyone began firing on them as Naruto ran straight at them, energy swords still drawn.

Naruto hit the ground sliding, dodging the massive hand of the beast. Naruto reached out, his energy swords still in hand, and cut its legs off at the knees. It bellowed in anger as it fell face first into the ground. Naruto jumped to his feet and then on its back to stab it in its ugly face. Two more lunged at him, both pinning him to the ground. The former Jinchuuriki roared, sending them flying high into the air as two tendrils of red energy sent them flying straight up into the air before coming down for a splattering death into the ground.

"He's on a killing spree!"

Foxy glanced over at the Marine that uttered that and shook his head as he continued firing his pistol into the horde of enemies. Two Flood controlled Elites went down in the distance and he gasped. "Oh my god, I killed them! Hey Scarlet, I think I just leveled up!" Scarlet stopped firing for a fraction of a second, her eyes lingering with the medic ODS for her team. She went back to firing on the Flood without a word.

"Flare throw!" three Unggoy screamed. Their plasma grenades flew through the air, being bounced by other explosions that helped them stick to three large Flood controlled Brutes. Three flashes of light destroyed them entirely. The Grunts all jumped for joy. "I stuck him," they shouted happily.

"You big bullying monster!" Zippo screamed as he and his Unggoy brothers all threw plasma grenades at the charging Infected Brutes.

"I will rip out your hearts, and show it to your dying eyes!" Kimimaro shouted as Tayuya, Deidara, Hidan, and Tobi began firing

anew on the enemy.

"_Uzumaki," _Rtas's voice broke over his Signal Unit that was in his ear. _"We are coming to pick the rest of you up. Hold tight."

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Naruto growled. He was down to just two tails now, and he could already feel the second one slipping away. He didn't have much time left. A female screamed in from behind him, forcing him to turn around. Hundreds of infected Unggoy and Jiralhanae were running towards Hinata and her Unggoy army. _Damn it_, he cursed as he ran towards her. He jumped over the sandbags, both swords still drawn. He lunged in front of the army of undead and quickly began destroying them. The Unggoy came forward; some trying to stay with him while others finished setting up turrets to help out. Several of the undead creatures got by, but those that did just ended up dead from the plasma turrets that were being used by religiously crazed Unggoy. Some of the parasites broke ranks and ran or crawled towards the other fighters.

Scarlet grabbed her pistol, bringing it up to bear as she fired three rounds into the skulls of two Grunts while using her rifle to mow down the further targets. Something pushed her to the ground and a scream of pain erupted from behind her. Looking back, she found Foxy with a massive set of plasma burns all over his body. He saved her life by sacrificing his own. Maybe he wasn't such an asshole like she first thought.

"Foxy," she sat him up on the sandbags as the fighting began to die down. Phantoms and Pelicans appeared overhead, all of them picking up those in the area. The two were picked up by a Phantom with the remaining Unggoy, Hinata, and Naruto who was now taking a knee while panting, his power gone. Scarlet tore off his vest and olive, staring straight at the bones of his rib cage. "You're going to be alright. You're not smart enough to know how to die," she informed him. He laughed as he motioned for her to come down so could hear him.

"Tell Tundraâ€¦" he coughed up blood as the Phantom began to rock, "â€¦that I always hated him. I always hated him the most. Tell him I always thought he was gay."

"Don't worry, I'll tell him for you." She lied. "Now hurry up and die you prick."

"Okay, Lesbian Girl." He coughed and died right there on the ground, not in her arms or anything.

Scarlet's left eye twitched as she tore her helmet off, revealing long brown hair. _I'm not a lesbian you idiot. _

Once the Phantoms landed in the aft of _Intent_, Naruto was greeted by Thel who handed him a new suit of his old SpecOps armor. Sasuke was giving out orders to the others just as the Phantom was cleaned out. "Uzumaki," Thel whispered, "the Spartan shall need our aid." Naruto gave him a smile as he placed his old helmet back on, the visor winking to life. Sasuke approached them, a shotgun in hand, and a flamethrower in the other. "I suppose there's no stopping you," Thel whispered.

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John ran as fast as he could. The reactor that powered the large ship known as High Charity was moments away from blowing up. He needed to get out of it before that happened. So he just ran. Flood Spores, Infected Fighters, and even the massive creatures all ran to get away from it. Some didn't bother with him. Others turned to fight. Those that turned to fight him were either ignored, killed by him, or killed as sections of the massive ship exploded. He ran around corners, dove through small sections in the walls that had blown up, and jumped ditches as he ran towards his Banshee he used to get here. That was his way out. That was his only way out.

"Chief," Cortana got his attention, "I'm reading friendly signals up ahead? Who would be crazy enough to come in here?" John jumped up on the ledge of the flesh walls and ducked as red hot flames licked over his head. Looking up, he spotted the Arbiter, Sasuke, and Naruto destroying the Flood. "The Arbiter and the Kyuubi? You two made nice?" She asked carefully. John grunted as he jumped up beside them.

"Come, we must go now!" Thel shouted. The team began to back up to an old Pelican that had once held the first ODST team to check this place out. John had run into the survivors who had all died at the hands of the Flood. Without thinking he ran in, hitting the switches to raise the ramps. Thel walked in just as he did this, Sasuke trailing behind him just a bit while Naruto waited till the last second to jump through the ever shrinking crack, risking his own tail to keep the Flood at bay. He opted for doing this by sticking the flamethrower with a plasma grenade and throwing it at them. It worked. John put Cortana into the Pelican as he took up the pilots' seat. He gave her one last glance before they took off. As they exited High Charity it began to finally accept its death and began to explode.

With High Charity destroyed, the only thing that now remained was to activate Halo. The Pelican nosed up, breaking into the clouds as it flew towards the new Installation 04.

27. Chapter 27

Chapter 27

"_We are onboard," _Rtas informed them, his voice booming over the speaker system inside the damaged Pelican, "_Humansâ€¦ and Sangheili. Well you not come with us, brother?" _

"No. This is our fight, and I will see it finished." Thel replied. Rtas accepted this and began moving his ship away from the smoking Pelican as he flew up towards the incomplete Installation. Thel didn't turn to watch them head towards the portal. He kept telling himself he had no need to, for he would see them again real soon. And if he did turn to watch the ship, he would see Naruto and Sasuke, both of which were getting their weapons ready for the fight. He honestly didn't want Naruto here, but Naruto, like Sasuke, was adamant in not leaving them here to deal with this on their own.

John glanced over his shoulder, looking past the image of Cortana on the holotank, and sighed as he noticed Sasuke grabbing all the

shotgun ammo and grenades he could carry. He really didn't want him here either. True he figured he might need a little help in doing this. He figured there would be something there that would attempt to stop them, but as to what it would be, he was certain that Thel and himself could take care of it. He wasn't willing to say thanks for them sticking by them, but he did appreciate it.

Johnson's image appeared on a tiny screen in front of Cortana, her image brightening just a bit at seeing his face again. "Johnson, do you have the frigate?" She asked carefully.

He gave her a curt nod. "Yes, Ma'am," he answered. "I'll land her as close to the control-room as I can." He informed her.

"Safe is better than close, Sergeant Major," she informed him with her hands on her hips, giving him a knowing expression.

"Rodger that," he hesitated before smiling. "And Ma'am, it's good to have you back." The screen blinked away, and Cortana looked away. John smiled inside.

Naruto and Sasuke finished loading over their weapons, the two working in complete silence as they stood up, each holding their weapons. Naruto was holding his two of his former double barrel rifles with his and his father's energy swords at his hips. He was back in his old armor from his time as a member of the SpecOps, but the only difference was that his left arm and his legs were incased in the same armor that Hinata had made for him and his team. It was now solid black, a testament to the battles he'd fought in.

Sasuke clipped two SMGs to his thighs and the shotgun on his back. He had a satchel with grenades, extra ammo, and his helmet tucked under his arm. John gave him a quick glance as he put it back on with a hiss as the gasses became sealed inside his suit. Like Naruto, his armor was scorched, covered with scars, and even had two former breaches in the chest where he'd been shot repeatedly by plasma fire. Even his faceplate had scratches on it.

Naruto walked to the front where the others were, his eyes glancing over the snowy region they were at.

Red lights winked on as John pulled the chip from the holotank and stuck it into the back of his helmet. John glanced back at the crevice they were heading towards as more lights winked on. Naruto walked back to the aft of the ship with Sasuke, both sitting down on opposite sides to keep from hurting each as the Pelican crashed into the snow with a loud thud. Both teens were thrown straight into the bulkhead while John was thrown nearly out of the front of the ship and Thel just slammed against the controls.

The hatch opened up as the four walked out, John being the first one out followed by Thel, then Sasuke, and then Naruto. Thel was holding an Assault rifle for John while the Sasuke reached down, grabbing the last of the SPKNr ammo. "Halo," Cortana whispered in awe, "It's so new. Unfinished. I'm not exactly sure what will happen when we fire itâ€¦" she told them.

Thel tossed the rifle to John who snatched it out of the air without looking. "We head for the portal. And we'll all head home." John answered.

Naruto took point, his twin rifles up searching for targets. Beside him was Sasuke, his two SMGs doing the same. Together they ran through the snow, leaving footprints that quickly vanished in the near blizzard conditions they were in. Thel and John were behind them, both looking at the two with their doubts high. The two of them had no reason to be here. If anything, they had a reason to go home, not to stay with them.

Sasuke gave the all clear with a hand motion, his silent nature returning to him. Reading up on his profile, John had learned that when his parents had died, or so he thought had died, he'd become very quiet, and always strived to be the best in the hopes of ending the war. Looking at him now, he couldn't help but feel bad for him. This wasn't his life. He should have been something else, not a fighter. But what was done was done. There was no turning back.

The two older warriors met up with the two teens, all four coming to a stop at the end of the caves to see the control-room. The snow didn't fall here. The high walls must have protected it from the wind and kept the snow from falling in it now. There was still a good foot of snow inside it, but it was no longer falling like it was outside.

Looking at the control-room, it looked more like it had just been slapped into the rock wall, rather than built into it. Bracings were either not sticking yet or barely holding it to the wall. A long thick slab of metal ran from the ground to the entrance, bending to make it possible, as if it were just to keep it from falling into the crevice below itself. Parts of it were still uprooted, tiles not placed or either still being placed by sentinels that worked together to do this.

John and Thel took point, their weapons raised in worry. Nothing had been this easy, and it wasn't going to be this easy now either.

The four walked out from under the cave, the bright light that was reflected back up from the snow momentarily blinding them until their faceplates polarized to compensate for it. High winds picked up before green blurs slammed down into the ground, exploded on impact. The four raised their weapons as hundreds more dropped out of the sky, filling the large valley with a green mist that was quick to die down.

Dark silhouettes moved through the quickly parting mist, revealing themselves to be the Flood. _**"Did you think me defeated?"
**_Gravemind's voice boomed from all around them as the Flood walked out of the green mist that finally parted. Naruto and Sasuke were already shooting at the approaching targets that walked towards them like old mindless zombie movies. Some held weapons while others walked around with missing limbs or crawled towards them.

"The control-room is at the top of that tower! Chief, go!" Cortana ordered hastily.

The four began blasting the enemy apart as they ran towards the tower. They just ran. That was all they could do. Do anything else but running would end badly for them. Sure they could have stopped and fought, but they had limited ammo while their enemy had unlimited numbers when compared to their ammo. So they just ran, cutting their

way through the enemy, slaying them as quickly as they could while they ran.

More and more pods impacted into the ground around them, more green mist forming as they ran under the support beam that shot out of the ground. More impacted in front of them while more fell down into the crevice below. Those that fell down in the crevice were the ones that worried John the most. He had seen the Flood fall from ridiculous heights and get up like it was nothing. Falling from that high up and hitting something like the ground down there, which was probably jagged rocks, wouldn't at all surprise him when they came straight back up for a fight.

John was shoved to the ground as auto grenade rounds flew over his faceplate, missing by inches alone. Sasuke had pushed him down and then rolled out of the way while Naruto fired onto the enemy that had taken over the hill that would lead up to the tower. Shards of fallen metal made excellent places for cover so long as the enemy didn't already control the tower.

Three impacts surrounded them, Infected Brutes running out with spike rifles in hand. John and Sasuke began firing at them while one of them tackled Naruto to the ground, knocking his weapons into the crevice below while trying to take him down with it as it grabbed him and ran towards it. Naruto unsheathed his own energy sword and cut its arm off before Thel fired five plasma bolts into its back. The creature pitched forward, dead from the sheer heat and large liquefied hole in its chest.

The former Jinchuuriki jumped to his feet, grabbing at his father's energy sword as well. With a loud cry he charged the nightmarish creatures that fired at him. John lobbed a grenade over Naruto to thin their numbers. Sasuke switched to his battle rifle and targeted the spore that rested inside their chests, mouths, and guts to take a few down. Thel fired at those to the sides as Naruto jumped the barracked of twisted metal.

The blond slashed wildly as the creatures began charging him, no longer using their weapons like they should. One of them swung a brute shot at his face. He ducked, twisted, and ran it through the back and out the chest with one of his swords while the other slashed a second one in half. He pulled his sword out of the first one as he kicked another one away, the Flood Spore half shattered in its gullet before it was stabbed. Two more came rushing at him but were taken down by a few well placed shots to the spore inside them, destroying the control the Flood had on it.

The others ran up to him, their weapons up and searching for more targets.

Laser beams began raining down on the ground in front of them where the snowy hill connected to the side of the tower that they needed to get up. More Infected Warriors appeared, most instantly killed by the heat of the beam weapons that rained down from the sentinels that were now flying around.

The four ran right through the beams that began killing more of the accursed Flood as they ran around a slab of turned up metal onto the metal structure of the control-room. More Flood appeared behind them with more sentinels killing them with their highly focused laser

weapons. Naruto dropped his two plasma grenades on the ground as they ran away from the fight. The Flood ran right over the two grenades when they exploded. Chunks of flesh flew and splattered on the ground, thinning the numbers for the remaining sentinels.

They ran through a small opening that would lead them to the ramp on the other side of the control-room and were greeted by the presence of fifty Infected Elites and five Thrashers. Two red beams made quick work of their numbers in a flash. Only a handful of Elites remained while only three Thrashers remained. Naruto and Sasuke looked up to see Johnson and Deidara with Spartan Lasers in hand and waiting for them to finish cooling down.

"_Keep moving, Chief. We got your back. Flood are crawling all over that tower," _Johnson warned. _"Watch yourself!"_

Naruto blinked and then smiled as Deidara gave him a nod. The former Jinchuuriki ran straight for one of the Thrashers with Sasuke. The three Thrashers ran at them like gorillas. Sasuke jumped over the two he was facing while Naruto slid underneath the one he was facing, his swords up and splitting it nearly in half as he passed under its legs. Sasuke stuck a fragmental grenade into its back and jumped away as sections of its body exploded outwardly. It howled in pain before Naruto silenced it while the other Thrasher turned to face them. A Spartan Laser made quick work of it while John and Thel moped up the remaining Infected Elites.

Once the group of Infected was dealt with they ran up the ramp as more shots from the Spartan Laser pair fired on the next level. John was the first one to the top; his eyes finding the smoking remains destroyed Thrashers. More Flood Dispersal Pods impacted on the structure, the green mist forming around them before the clean air spread it out and away. John rolled a fragmental grenade towards them while they still seemed a bit dazed and confused. The grenade exploded, killing most of the Flood that were still coming from the pods in a disoriented state.

Those that remained turned to fight.

Thel and Naruto rushed them, energy swords drawn. Sasuke and John killed the enemy behind them that appeared from more of the Flood Dispersal Pods. The two former Covenant warriors slashed their way towards the next hole in the wall that would take them to the next ramp while more red lasers fell from the sky, combined with the sentinel fire that tore and melted the flesh of the Infestation. As they passed onto the other side they were greeted by more Infected warriors but there were twice as many sentinels as well to help them.

"_Be carefully, we can't cover you on the far side." _Johnson informed them. They didn't need to worry though. With the help of the sentinels they were able to quickly dispatch them and head up to the control-room doors. Johnson and Deidara appeared on the ice ledge above them, Deidara preparing to jump down when Johnson stopped him. _"Spark?! You in there? Open the damn door!" _Johnson shouted angrily.

The radios all hissed as Spark once more connected himself to their radios. _"Of course Reclaimerâ€¦ just as soon as you eliminate all the toxic Flood cells. I'm afraid contamination protocols do not

allowâ€¦" _

"_Yeah, yeah I hear you." _Johnson muttered as more pods impacted around the structure.

"_Was that the monitor?" _Cortana suddenly spoke up, her voice holding curiosity and irritation. She didn't like Spark. He not only tried to kill them several times, but he also seemed like a pervert to her. He had stared at her body a lot longer than what she had thought polite. Sure when John did it she didn't care, but there was a difference in her mind. To her, only John could look at her like that while no one else should have that right. Plus she always knew where his eyes wereâ€¦ unless most people. She got no reply back though, and she rolled her eyes inside his helmet, something John could practically see even though she didn't have her avatar out for him to see. _"Well we are finally doing what he wanted." _She added a moment later.

Hundreds of the Infected creatures came at them. Sentinels rained laser beams down on the enemy while the Humans and Covenant began firing into their ranks to help thin their numbers. Naruto ran out into the fray, both swords drawn and carving a path of blood and broken bodies as he charged a single Thrasher. A red beam of energy tore it in half before Naruto could get to it. Following it he found it belonged to Johnson. Deidara fired as well, hitting another Thrasher that appeared behind John.

Before long all the Flood had been killed and Johnson and Deidara were down on the ground next to the others. John stared Deidara down, his silent question being answered by Deidara himself. "I'm not leaving my Kaidon here with you barbarians," was his reply as he walked into the large hallways of strange metal and glass floor. The doors were left open as more sentinels appeared to cover their entrance.

Naruto and John stopped, placing their hands on the ground or on the wall as a voice whispered in their minds. _**"Do I take life, or give it? Who is victim, and who is foe?" **_The two were helped up by their comrades, Cortana coming to a quick conclusion almost instantly.

"_It's trying to rebuild its self on this ring." _She announced.

"Good," Naruto muttered with a shake of his head. "Confine it; activate the ring, and its dead. No more voices in my head."

Johnson glanced over at the others as they walked to the last of the doors. It parted as the one behind them closed shut once the dull roars of the monsters behind them began to sound. Naruto and Thel began walking towards the shut door with weapons drawn. Sasuke looked around the room as Master Chief tossed Cortana to Johnson after telling him to yank her. John gave it a quick glance, as if he were afraid to even hand her over to anyone else.

"I'm not going to lose her too," Johnson told him sadly. Hypocritically, he told himself. How many times had he said those words and yet still lost someone. His wife, his son, his friends, and what was to stop him from losing her? John still tossed her to him as Spark began floating down towards them. Johnson snatched it out of

the air, a determined grin on his face as he turned around towards the controls. Each step made him feel good and bad at the same time. He was one of the few from Harvest that had actually lived long enough to see this day. Yes there were times he wished he hadn't lived, but this was making up for it. This would make things right in his mind.

"Oh! Hello!" Spark greeted happily in a sing song voice. Johnson glanced at him with a brow quirked just a bit. "Wonderful news. The instillation is almost complete."

"Terrific," Johnson muttered unhappily. It was because of this damn ring that he had so many bad memories. Even if it was nothing more than a damn remake.

"Yesâ€¦ isn't it." The Forerunner AI said darkly. "I have begun my simulations. No promises, but initial results indicate that this facility should be ready to fire in just a few more days," he told him happily.

Johnson sat the Spartan Laser next to the controls, his eyes squinting as he prepared to put Cortana into the system. Did he seriously not understand that the Flood were basically at the door and trying to get in. "We don't have a few more days," Johnson stated harshly. He hadn't meant to sound so hard, but this was the end of the war. This would bring an end to the Flood! Did he seriously think he wasn't going to use it now and worry about the repercussions later?

"But, but, butâ€¦ A premature firing will destroy the Ark!" Spark tried to reason.

"Deal with it."

"You'd destroy this instillation?" Spark whispered as his once blue eye began changing to red. Johnson reached out to put Cortana in as Spark flew above him. Johnson never saw it coming nor even expected it. Spark fired his high focused laser straight into his chest. Johnson screamed in pain as the heat melted through his armor, burning his skin away around his lungs and ribs. Blood spilled out of his mouth as he collapsed to the ground. "Unacceptable! Unacceptable! Absolutely unacceptable!" Spark yelled as he fired into Deidara's left side. The former Iwa-nin spun with the blow, his armor melting around his arm and throwing the Spartan Laser away. John and Sasuke came running at him but were both shot by his energy weapon. Thel and Naruto ran back to the room only to get shot as well and thrown back against the wall on the other end of the hallway.

Spark flew in front of John, his crimson eye glaring straight into the faceplate of John's helmet. "I see now that helping you was wrong!" He shouted as he fired again when John began to get up. The Spartan II collapsed to a knee as Spark continued his rant. "You are the child of my maker. Inheritor of all they left behind! But this ringâ€¦ is mine!" John looked up into the crimson eye of Spark, his own eyes narrowing in anger. "You do not deserve this ring. I have kept it safe. IT BELONGS TO ME!" Spark screamed as he charged his weapon one last time. At near point blank range, there was no way that John would survive it, and with no shields at the moment, he was certain that he wouldn't make it.

"Not for long!" a voice coughed out before a red beam of energy knocked Spark away. The beam he'd been charging flew out and burned a long line into the floor, cracking and melting the glass as John got to his feet with the help of Sasuke holding Deidara's Spartan Laser. Johnson smiled at them as they ran up to him, his own laser up for John. "Kick his ass," he ordered before collapsing from blood loss.

"We're you trying to blind me!" Spark shouted as he came to a stop in front of the controls to activate the ring. John and Sasuke moved away from Johnson. Spark would hopefully take notice to only them and try to kill them. Johnson couldn't take any more shots like that. The rampant AI fired on them in quick control bursts. John jumped and evaded each shot as he charged his weapon. He had taken notice that it only had about fifty percent power left. He didn't need to waste any of the shots for this.

Sasuke fired once, his Spartan Laser empty after one shot. Spark turned on him and fired. Sasuke winced as his shields drained from one blow. John raised his fully charged Spartan Laser and fired. The red beam tore into Spark, but it didn't destroy him. His hard armor structure protected most of his body, but he was still damaged from the sheer heat alone. He gave out a painful yelp as he turned to fire on John who was already charging another shot, ignoring all the warnings about the device overheating. Spark fired. Sasuke jumped in the way, his shields halfway recharged as John waited for Spark's blast to stop. It stopped. He fired. The last of his energy was spent in one shot. Spark hovered in the air, his form glowing bright blue before exploding into small chunks.

John dropped the gun and ran to Sasuke and Johnson. Sasuke's armor was melted around his chest, but he was okay. It hadn't gotten any further than that. Johnson wasn't so lucky. His Bio Signs were failing. Each breath he took was ragged and labored, as if he were trying to hold out just for the sake of doing it. Even John knew it was pointless. He had seen worse, but Johnson wouldn't survive this. Lying to himself made him feel just a bit better as he took a knee and reached down to pick him up. Johnson grabbed his hand, Cortana's chip being forced into his own.

"I'm getting you out of here," John told him seriously.

Johnson just laughed and coughed with a shake of his head. "No! no you're not," he found it ironic. Here, at the end, he would finally see an end. Memories of his friends and family rushed back through his mind as he handed Cortana over to him and grabbed him with the other hand. He could swear he could see Jenkins, Byrne, Brien, Healy, Jilan al-Cygni Miranda Keys and even Jacob Keys, all smiling down at him. "Don't!" darkness was clouding his vision now. "Don't ever! let her go." He could taste more blood entering his mouth. "Send me out!" with a bang!" his voice trailed off as his Bio signs went flat. His hand slipped from John's, leaving the chip that held Cortana in it.

Naruto picked up Deidara who was barely coconscious who was covered in blood. Thel helped Naruto out by taking his weapon so he couldn't fight. Naruto was intent on saving Deidara, a true sign that he was willing to do anything for those under his care. Sasuke walked back with him as John placed the chip just close enough for Cortana to jump into the controls. Her tiny avatar paused as she looked down,

her arms akimbo and her eyes almost closed. "Chief," she whispered sadly. "I'm so sorry." John tilted his a hand a bit, a sign that she needed to hurry. She looked away as she raised a hand, activating the ring before jumping back inside the chip. Master Chief kept his eyes away from the corpse of Johnson. As the place rumbled all he could do was look away from his fallen comrade. If he looked now he'd have to stay with him.

He turned around, staring straight at the others who covered their eyes as the beam of pure energy shot straight up behind him. The place began to fall apart and come down on them. A large support beam fell and slammed into the walkway, raising the structure and forcing it sideways. John ran as Johnson began to slide off the edge. Without noticing it, he had begun to cry as images of Sam, Fried, Kelly, William, Kurt, Mendez, Halsey, Linda, Joshua, and the other Spartan II's that had become his family flashed through his mind. Johnson was just another person on his long list of people he'd sworn to protect.

"I am sorry, Spartan; but come." Thel spoke up.

"We must go!" Naruto shouted as the doors opened up. Flood Spores were the first thing he saw. They were quickly killed by Sasuke and John. Thel grabbed Naruto's shoulder, shaking his head slightly as he forced him to the back. Naruto would do no fighting now. He had an injured member of his Keep with him. So Naruto followed. He only followed them as they ran through the exploding hallways. Metal pipes fell down, walls explodes, spewing chunks of molten metal and circuits onto the ground as they ran.

The dull roar of the Flood was shadowed by the massive sets of explosions that sounded around them. They were soon outside, explosions still forming. There was a loud crack sounding just as they escaped. Some of the sentinels were fighting each other. Those that were being destroyed were only guilty of melting the ice to make a ramp. They were quickly destroyed, but when they were dealt with the sentinels that remained quickly turned on the Flood and even the fleeing warriors.

"_Find the doorway in the cliff. The _Dawn_ is on the other side!"
_Cortana ordered.

It wasn't that hard to miss it. It was currently being guarded by the Flood and the sentinels that fought for control of the room. John threw his last grenade at the door as they ran towards it. They ran straight through the explosion as the Flood and sentinels were taken out by it. Naruto was the last one in, Deidara coughing up blood but smiling as Naruto whipped around the edge. Sasuke had his rifle up and firing into the Flood Spores that had jumped out at them. An explosion took out most of the Sentinels above them, allowing the Flood to get towards them without much resistance.

Thel unleashed his two swords that Naruto had been using and cut the enemy to bits. John followed, and then Sasuke and Naruto. The four ran through small fights and around corners. They dodged Carriers that were walking towards the fight, ready to do what they could. As they rounded another corner, they came to see Johnson's Warthog. Naruto was the first one to it and quick to place Deidara in the floorboard of the passenger seat. Sasuke jumped up front with John who decided to drive. Thel took the gunner seat while Naruto jumped

in behind him, his hands gripping the railing above the Warthog.

"_Go Spartan! Go! Go! Go!" _Cortana shouted as a plum of purple fire began hurling out of the tunnel. John floored it, evading the flames as the Warthog bounced along the dirt path. Cortana began scanning for the _Dawn_ and the quickest route to it. She found one and gave him markers on his HUD to use. John leveled out of the Warthog as it jumped over a small cliff and down onto metal sheeting that was still being applied to the instillation.

Sentinels that were once helping place these were quick to turn on them and the Flood that began chasing after them. Thel began firing the massive turret on the approaching enemy. They were quickly disposed of, leaving the Sentinels with them as their main target. John began swerving to evade their shots as he rounded a corner and hit a jump. Deidara mumbled something about insane men in green suits as they came down hard. The Warthog bounced and finally began moving as the Flood jumped towards them.

John forced the Warthog through a long line of curves and turns that took them into the path of more Flood. "I don't suppose you could take a route that doesn't put one of mine in danger, you stupid tin can?" Naruto shouted. Yes his mind was focused on Deidara's wellbeing. He had sworn his allegiance to him and would forever serve him so long as they both survived this. If Deidara hadn't come he might not have cared.

Sasuke glanced up at him, his eyes narrowing in anger from behind his faceplate. "Shut up already, Foxman! We're doing our best to get out of here in one piece!"

"It's Onalerl Uzumaki Naruto, you Demon!"

"It's Sasuke, Foxman!"

"Enough! Both of you!" Thel shouted over the noise of the turret as he fired it.

"Sorry," Naruto forcefully apologized. Thel knew he didn't mean it, but he didn't have time to keep him in line. "But the driver can't seem to understand that if Deidara get's infected, I will kill him!"

"You'd kill him just because she got infected!" Sasuke yelled.

"I'mâ€| â€| manâ€|" Deidara whispered quietly. It went unheard by all.

"Yes. I would kill him." John tightened his grip on the steering wheel, his eyes trying to stay focused on the "Road" as they drove. Naruto was pretty serious about killing him it sounded.

"You're an asshole!" Sasuke shouted back.

"_Can you both stop your bickering?! You're disturbing, Chief! He needs to concentrate to get us out of here!" _Cortana shouted at them.

_And you're not helping any, _John thought as they rounded another corner. John floored it as more Sentinels appeared, some trying to stop pillars from falling around them. John's heart quickly sank as he saw a large raise in the tiles. He couldn't see over it. For him, he suddenly had the memories of his time at a roller coaster ride that just dropped. He had seen it more than actually ridden it. He was too scared at the time to do it. "Jump ahead," he shouted.

Naruto stood up just as an Infected Elite appeared to knock him off. It worked. Naruto fell off the back of the Warthog and skidded along the metal sheeting before coming to a stop. Thel screamed for John to stop. John couldn't stop now. Looking back he could see the ground falling down. If he stopped they would fall. Naruto raised his left arm and fired a grappling hook that had been installed into his armor. Thel snatched it out of the air and was quick to wrap it around the turret base. Naruto was sure this would hurt. John hit the ramp and the cable went tense. Naruto's whole left arm screamed in pain as he was yanked to the ground and dragged towards the flying vehicle. When Naruto hit the ramp the Warthog came to a stop. John began to floor it just as soon as Naruto came down on the hood of the vehicle. He destroyed the cable, jumped from the hood to the back, and went to sitting down again.

"You learn anything?" Sasuke joked. Thel and John shook their heads. These two were going to keep arguing over stupid shit throughout the whole thing.

Naruto relocated his dislocated arm with a sickening crunch before answering. "Yes. Hinata-chan is a fucking genius for installing that. Though I can't do it again. She only had time for one. I'll let you do it next. It's loads of fun!"

"I'll pass."

"Pussy!"

"What?"

"I called you a pussy, Demon Pussy!"

"Do not make me come back there!"

"So you're willing to get knocked out next?" Sasuke turned around, his eyes once more focused on the "road" they were on. "I win!"

"Enough!" John, Thel, and Cortana shouted. John looked at Sasuke and glared at him. "Shut up, now. That's an order!"

"You knowâ€|"

"Shut up."

"Fine." Sasuke admitted defeat.

Thel turned to look at Naruto who was shaking his head. "I will be the one doing the union of your two marriages." He warned. Naruto had intentions of opening his mouth but after hearing that he was quick to shut it.

"_Halo is ripping its self apart!" _Cortana stated.

"Yeah!" Thel cut his eyes towards Naruto as he glared at Master Chief's head. "We can see that." He motioned towards the exploded sheets of metal that were flying over their heads now. Cortana became quite on the outside. But through a private channel she nicely asked Chief to slam on the brakes under the idea that the ground was going to come down in front of them as they passed through yet another long structure. John did as asked and hit the brakes, slamming Naruto head into the metal bracers he was taking firm hold of. "You did that on purpose."

"Do it again." Sasuke asked nicely.

"Didn't I order you to shut up?"

"You can't order me around. Technically I don't exist. And if I don't exist, you can't order me around." Naruto stared at Sasuke, opened his mouth, and then shut it. Sasuke was looking straight at the Chief with a grin on his face. Naruto glanced back at the approaching Flood as he noticed that they were starting to seem very interesting to him. "So!"

"I'll shoot you," John interrupted. He wouldn't really shoot him. Knock him out, yes. But shoot him, no. He didn't have it in him to shoot him. But it was tempting to a certain extent.

"_Ninety-percent! Firing sequence initiated!" _Cortana cried out.

A tower tipped, cracked, and then fell down on the "road" they were driving on. Metal sheets broke apart. The ground shook and rose as more of the large pieces of metal were thrown into the air. Tiny pieces flew at them, some cracking Naruto's armor as he shielded Thel from the blasts. Thel's shields wouldn't have been able to take the hit. Naruto knew that and took most of it as the Warthog flew up into the air after hitting another raised section. They bumped as they hit the ground, the suspension already at its limits with two Spartans, a Sangheili, and one half-breed warrior.

The _Dawn _became visible to them. It was a sight that made them all spring with joy. It was the end. It would be the end of everything if they reached it. The war was over, the Flood was about to be killed, and all they had to do was escape. "_Gun it, Chief. Floor it right into the hanger!" _Cortana shouted as the ground began to buckle. The Warthog dipped down into a straight drop that ended with a ramp. John cringed as he saw it. Sasuke braced himself against the dashboard. Thel reached for the top of the frame. Naruto grabbed Deidara, his energy sword from Thel's belt, cut the turret off at the base just as they hit the ramp, and kicked it off before jumping as the Warthog was struck by a piece of metal that made it pitch forward.

Metal grinding on metal screeched over the roar of explosions as the Frigate suddenly began to dip nose up. Naruto unfolded his arms from around Deidara who breathed heavily. Naruto smiled, grabbing his friend and putting him on his shoulder. The screeching metal sounded again. Looking up, he found support beams breaking loose and preparing to come down. He ran for the door just as a Scorpion Tank went grinding along the floor towards Thel who took cover behind a stack

of crates. Sasuke was running towards the door as sections of the wall began to bust loose, spewing bolts in every which direction at him.

Naruto and Sasuke reached the door as John jumped over the Warthog in a single bound, stopping only to look back at the Arbiter as he came out of the crates. They gave each other a silent nod, both suddenly knowing what to do. Without hesitation the three moved towards the bridge of the ship while John ripped Cortana's chip out of his helmet and gently slammed it into the control console in the hanger. Her avatar appeared before him almost immediately as the Frigate suddenly roared to life.

"Hang on," she ordered as she finished pushing the engines to their limit. John did hang on. The sudden force had nearly made him lose his balance and with the air being sucked out of the hanger it didn't make it any easier. He was soon literally hanging on for dear life as the instillation began to burn and change colors. Had they been paying attention, it would have been a beautiful sight to see. The mixture of colors, the swirling energy that had been strong enough to cover vast regions of a single section of their universe, would have been a truly beautiful sight to those watching.

Bolts, support beams, the floor, even the crates, Warthog and Scorpion Tank began to move, their treads and metal surfaces grinding along the ground before they succumbed to the vacuum that tugged at them. The Warthog came and smacked into the control console, knocking John free and sending him grinding along the ground in his many attempts to stop. He tried grabbing, flailing, and then just jammed a fist into the metal floor, his hand going straight through it like a rock through paper.

"Chief!" John looked up in time to see the Scorpion Tank tumbling towards him. It bounced in front of him and then flew out into space as a bubble began to appear behind them. Bluish white, Cortana realized. It looked more like someone blowing bubbles as they chewed gum. That was all it reminded her of as John began his long crawl back up, his eyes staying focused on the one woman in his life that ever meant anything to him really.

_Almost there, _he told himself. _Almost won! _He punched another hole into the bulkhead, each step, each thrust, becoming harder and harder until finally he was standing in front of Cortana. He won. He did it all. He kept his promise to Halsey. She asked him to bring Humanity victory over the Covenant. He did that. He beat them, joined up with them, and then destroyed the Flood. He could only smile at her as he plucked her chip from the console and placed it back into his helmet while collapsing down in front of the terminal with his back to the space behind him.

"_If we don't make itâ€¦|"_

"We'll make it," he told her truthfully. He wouldn't stop breaking promises now.

She smiled at his words as John placed his head against the terminal, his body quickly growing tired. _"â€¦it's been an honor serving with you, John."_ He could have sworn he heard her say more, but he blacked out, his body sore, tired, and used up. He couldn't fight anymore even if he wanted to.

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March 3 2553

Trumpets and drums played in the background as heroes gathered on the edge of the cliff that overlooked where the Portal had once stood. Hundreds of people stood still, all at attention as birds flew around. It was a clear day, not a cloud in sight. No wind. No storms. No war. It was over. Marines stood side by side with Naval Officers and ONI Spooks alike. Medics that survived in the fight stood beside doctors, scientists, and families that cried for lost loved ones.

In front of them stood a large slab of metal resting on a platform, pictures, guns, medals, letters, dog-tags, and flowers resting on it. A podium stood up front by a single set of small stairs with Lord Hood running a hand over his bald head as he licked his lips. His eyes reflected sadness, compassion, and most of all, respect for those in front of him. These were the people who hadn't run. They stood, they fought, they watched loved ones die, and they won. These people were heroes, but they weren't like those behind him.

He drew in a deep breath, the other heads of the military standing in the back, their eyes fixated on him as he began. "For us, the storm has passed. The war is over. But let us never forget those who journeyed into the howling dark and did not return. For their decision required courage beyond measure—sacrifice, and unshakable conviction that their fight; our fight, was elsewhere. As we start to rebuild, this hillside will remain barren, a memorial to heroes fallen. They ennobled all of us, and they shall not be forgotten."

Even as he spoke these words, he honestly wondered if this was really the end of it all. He remembered seeing the split Frigate plummet into the ocean; the naval officers with cutting torches racing out to free who they could that was inside. It had been a pain staking twenty minutes as the crew cut through the thick armor plating of Forward Unto Dawn. He remembered getting the news that Master Chief, Earth's greatest Hero had fallen due to the collapsing portal. It had torn the ship in half, leaving him lost in the stream of Slipspace, forever lost to the void of darkness.

Looking down at the front row he found Naruto, Thel, Deidara, and Sasuke, all standing before him like imposing giants that they were. Naruto was dressed in Japanese robes of black and white. Deidara was beside him, dressed in the UNSC Military uniform, his codename "Chick" stenciled into it that he wore like a badge of honor. Sasuke was dressed in the similar clothing, his eyes downcast but his head still held high. Thel stood beside Naruto, his eyes staring at someone on the memorial stand.

Terrence Hood turned around, his back to the crowd as he faced the images of those who had died or gone MIA. He had lost a lot people to this war. Thel took this chance to walk up to the stand, his eyes still focused on the images of the people he served with. When he came to a stop beside the man, his arms behind his back, Thel wondered if he had done the right thing. He felt he should have done more. He should have gone to activate the ring. Johnson had died because he had gone to make sure the door was still held firmly shut. He should have taken that attack. But he couldn't second guess it

now. What was done was done. He couldn't change it, or his actions he took during the war.

Hood lowered his head, his eyes reflecting only the hatred he had bottled up from having to work with the Elites. "I remember how this war started," he whispered hotly. Thel closed his eyes, accepting full responsibility for this. He had done his fair share in the war. "What your kind did to mine. I can't forgive you. But you have my thanks, for standing by him to the end." Lord Hood smiled, his voice becoming calm, certain, and full of respect as he held out his hand for Thel. Thel took it, his clawed hand wrapping oddly around the Human hand. "Hard to believe he's dead."

Thel let go, his head looking up to _Shadow of Intent_ as five Phantoms began flying towards them. "Were it so easy." He whispered, his voice trailing off as though he knew something. Lord Hood turned back to the crowd, his eyes looking over the people on the left. All of them dressed in military uniforms began to turn and follow Naruto as he walked towards the landing Phantoms. They were his people, the people from the shinobi world. Hundreds had come with them, fleeing the planet, not those that could accept him for who he was were returning with him. He might have laughed, he might have cried, but right now, all he wanted to do was see them home.

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Rtas stared at the holotank that projected the image of Earth. He honestly had spent countless nights dreaming of finding the planet and glassing it for honor and for the path. But now he was here helping them, he had helped them, putting aside his old hatred for his brethren that had fallen to their hands. He was willing to move on, but not forgive them. Yet here he was, standing on the bridge of his ship, his eyes scanning the planet he had so fiercely protected, fought for, and now was taking up those that had fought against them. Naruto's people were coming to Sanghelios with them. He didn't know if it was a good thing or a bad thing, but he would stay by his side for all the things Naruto had done for him.

The doors slid open, Thel walking through them with a slight smile. Rtas turned his head to greet him, his arms crossed still crossed over his chest. "Things look different without the Prophets lies clouding my vision," he commented slowly. He lowered his arms as Thel walked up to him. "I would like to see our own home. To know that it is safe." Thel smiled, a clawed hand finding its way to his lifelong friend's shoulder.

"Fear not. For we have made it so."

Rtas nodded, his arm coming up to his chest. "By your word, Arbiter," he replied. Without a word he relinquished control of his ship to him.

Thel wasted no time in taking up the controls, his body suddenly tired yet filled with anticipation of returning home to his wives. He would love all of them, watch his children grow, and help Naruto with his family. "Take us home!"

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Lights kicked on. "Chief?! Can you hear me?" Cortana screamed into

his helmet's speaker system. John blinked his eyes. He was floating. Using his lights he was quick to see why as he looked around at the damage. "I thought I lost you, too." She added a moment later.

John pushed off a wall, his body spinning in the air as he floated around as he searched for a weapon. Even after winning the war he felt naked without a gun or at least some sort of a weapon in his hands. "What happened," he asked as he found his assault rifle. He snapped it to his back as he floated towards the end of the ship. It wasn't so much an "end" as it was just a torn off section. Outside he could see debris floating around, the edge still glowing cherry red from whatever hit them.

"I'm not sure. When Halo fired it shook itself to pieces. Did a number on the Ark. The portal couldn't sustain itselfâ€¦ we made it through just as it collapsedâ€¦ no some of us made it." She informed him. John turned around, his intentions on finding something he could use now. He moved through the zero-g environment with all his training. Even though he hated it, he had to admit that right now he enjoyed it. He didn't have the strength to actually even walk really. He was so tired from the fighting, the days of not sleeping until everyone was safe, and now his completed mission.

He ended up the Cryogenics part of the ship, a place where he could sleep supposing they worked. He found a holotank, thankful to find one right in front of the freezer or Admirals wife as some of the people had taken to calling them. "But we did it. Truth. The Covenant. The Flood." John popped her inside the holotank, her image swirling to life in front of him. She brightened up the dark place and his day just a bit. He flicked the lights off as she kept talking. "It's finished."

"It's finished," John repeated. He was slow to remove his rifle, his hands aching as he placed it gently into a small holder that it wasn't meant for. It fell in with a small thunk that echoed throughout the ship and into the vast void of space.

"I'll drop a beacon. But it will be awhile before anyone finds us. Years even." Cortana told him sadly. "I'll miss you."

John had already climbed into the cryo-tube. His motions were slowed. His suit wasn't failing him and they both knew it. He was old. He'd been there for the beginning, and was now at the end of it. He was Forty-two years old, had been fighting and training since he was six years old. He had been deprived of a normal childhood, instead being scripted for something he possible never wanted. But in the end, he possible enjoyed himself, living each day like it was last, saving lives and throwing himself into danger all for the sake of humanity and her colonies.

He smiled. "Wake meâ€¦ when you need me," he ordered as the pod slowly began to close around him. Cortana watched it close around him, her eyes wide in surprise. Neither of them ever said it in the short time they'd been together. There was no need for it. They cared for each other in their own unique ways. She had Halsey's memories, her core logic and will to protect her Spartansâ€¦ no her kidsâ€¦ had been etched into her own core logic. And now she would watch him until they were discovered, rescued, and brought safely back to Earth where he would sleep until he was needed again.

****The End****

End
file.